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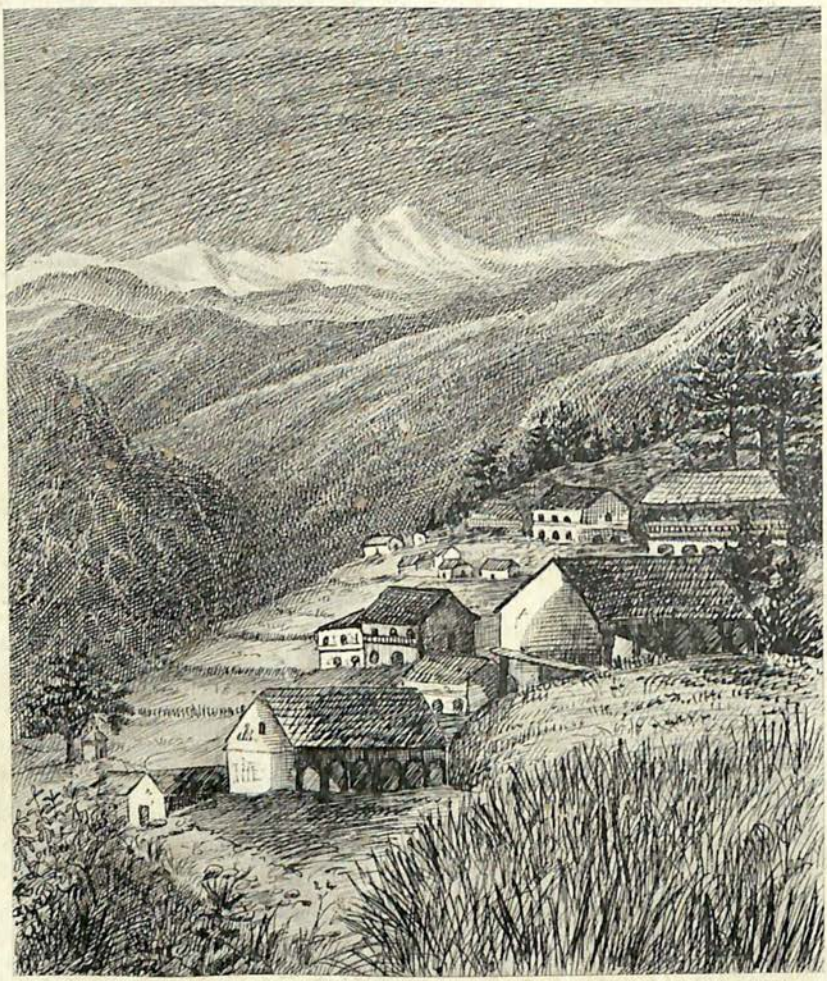
The Real Indian People



D. I. Thomson.

Kilani.

The Real Indian People

Being More Tales and Sketches of the Masses

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BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE.

In a former work—'The Silent India'—the author expressed the opinion that the political situation in that country was satisfactory, and concluded with the words, "With the Silent India contented, and its sons loyally serving under the British flag, we need have little fear for the safety of the Indian Empire." His views at the time were regarded by a few critics as somewhat optimistic, but it has been decreed that within a year of the appearance of the book, a most striking demonstration of their accuracy should be afforded by the attitude at once adopted by the Princes and people in our great dependency, when England sounded her call to arms. No sooner had she declared war, than a wave of loyal enthusiasm rolled over India; sweeping away in its strength and intensity all traces of disaffection and unrest. The real India spoke, and

spoke with no uncertain sound, and the voices of the agitator and sedition-monger faded into silence.

When we first took the field, the moment was so obviously unsuitable for the appearance of any literature unconnected with such an absorbing topic, that it was deemed inadvisable to bring out the present book; though the manuscript was at that time actually in the hands of the publishers. But with the determination to call our Indian forces to our aid, a new situation was created; for it seemed probable that considerable interest would be excited in England regarding the life, habits, religion, &c., of the rural classes from whom such forces are principally drawn. This fact, and also the kind reception which had been accorded to 'The Silent India,' were held to justify the appearance of the present volume —which is now presented in its original form.

In both these works the note sounded has been "Keep touch with the masses"—the great silent rural population which, of all sections of the community, most likes and respects us, and which, as said before, supplies the great majority of the men now standing with us, as brothers in arms, against our enemies in the field. Nowhere are relations better than between the European officers in our Indian army and their men—no-

where better, too, than where district officers are still working on the old-fashioned but welcome lines adopted by their predecessors in the past. It is all-essential that the races should come to know and appreciate one another; for such contact always makes for respect and confidence. It is in the fear that modern systems of administration may have a tendency in the future to loosen relations between the peasantry and ourselves, that the writer has urged the desirability of, as far as possible, giving more facilities to magistrates and all other European officials, for spending more time on tour and in camp, among the people—and also (as is indeed being done) of making such arrangements as will allow of officers remaining long enough in their charges to come to know, not only the landed gentry, but also the countryside generally. This may sound something like a counsel of perfection it is true, but it must be remembered that the visit of the "sahib" to any particular locality and what he said and did there, are subjects of long and interested discussion in villages many miles distant from his tents; so that the, to the writer's mind, all-important task of keeping touch with the rural population is not in reality such an extremely difficult one as might at first sight appear. For many years to come, the personal

element must be the most important factor in making for good-will and right understanding between Indians and ourselves, and, if the writer's views be correct, it is only in camp that the official can come to thoroughly learn and know the real circumstances, thoughts and desires of the masses. See and hear the people in their homes. This was the system of the older satraps —this was the secret of their hold upon the people — and in the fact that the same sound principle is still acted upon by all good officers, lies, the writer honestly believes, one of the principal explanations of why India to-day has so loyally rallied to the flag.

It is not too much to say, that if we exclude members of the Indian services, officers of the Indian army, missionaries and planters, very few Anglo-Indians have any intimate knowledge of the real Indian people. Impressions regarding it, gathered in towns and cities, have little or no value. At least two-thirds of all the inhabitants of the land are purely agriculturists, and hardly ever enter a large centre of population—except it be to dispose of a little produce, and to then return to their villages. Progress, educational or in any other form, has hardly touched them, and they remain in their thoughts and lives very much what their forefathers were many

centuries ago. It is true of course that there are patches on the great map of India where such conditions have almost passed away and where the ferment of new thought is obviously working; but such localities, the writer believes, are few in number and limited in extent. It would, at all events, be extremely unwise to legislate at the present time on the supposition that these restricted areas are typical of India, or that the views of their inhabitants are those of the population generally. He apprehends that a real danger lies in letting the wish be father to the thought, and in concluding, from the utterances of the cultured few, that Western ideas have so strongly and widely leavened the thoughts of the masses, that India as a whole is ready for the grateful reception of Occidental methods and institutions. Regrettable as the fact may appear, their introduction is indeed far more generally actually resented, and the modest craving of the dwellers on the countryside is, in the majority of cases, merely to be left alone. Perhaps there is nothing very extraordinary about this attitude. The sentiments, customs, and religions of such people, many of them, date back to remote antiquity, and, when we come to think of it, it is only within the last century or so that we have made any serious efforts to substitute any others

for them. The early European settlers in India were traders pure and simple, and the last thing they thought of was to run counter to the thoughts and feelings of races among whom they only lived on sufferance. Then came wars and struggles with rival Western powers, and also with dynasties and potentates in India itself—very unfavourable periods for introducing reforms touching the daily life of a suspicious and prejudiced community. Real and extended efforts in such directions are of quite recent date. That we have done so much in such a comparatively short time, indeed, most surprises those who know the people best; but we must not mistake the ruffling of the surface of the water in the pool for any forceful stirring of the hidden depths below. Now and again a few paragraphs in an English paper will reveal perhaps that a "suttee" has been carried out within a few miles of some large centre of light and learning (one is recorded as these lines are penned)—or some other similar instance of the persistence of old and barbarous superstition and custom comes to light to depress the kindly and sanguine reformer. Almost any judge in a country district could horrify Western ears by a simple recital of the details of cases he has frequently to deal with. The veneer of civilisation in some parts of the East is in reality

very thin, and the awakening of which we hear so much to-day, appears to be more obvious from a distance than to persons on the spot. It is not denied that there has been much real progress in towns and cities in India recently, and this has spread to a limited area surrounding them, especially upon the main roads; but twenty or thirty miles from such large centres, the traveller in most parts of the country still finds himself, to his surprise, among a population with characteristics peculiar to itself, and with very little in common with the urban communities. This is the people — by Western minds so imperfectly understood—of which the writer strives to tell. It is ignorant, credulous, and almost devoid of initiative. But it constitutes the bone and sinew of the country, is industrious and contented, faithful to its salt, and, under trusted leaders, brave and devoted.

In the present volume the author has repeated the plan he adopted in 'The Silent India,' of including stories along with the descriptive sketches—less with the hope of exciting much interest in the actual incidents of the tales themselves, than with the intention of depicting the ordinary life of the peasantry and their habits, thoughts and customs in the less known areas, in what he trusts may prove a more

attractive form than were they merely presented without any such disguise. In the course of his wanderings for something like thirty years, among the people, many strange tales and legends have been related to him over the camp fire and elsewhere; and it is upon these that the stories have been based. He has also, acting upon suggestions, included in the present book one or two sketches of incidents illustrating some of the sterner and more exacting duties of an official in India.

Briefly, he has endeavoured in the chapters of this and his former work, to in some degree portray the mental and material conditions of the great body of the Indian masses as they are to-day. They have not been written for the Anglo-Indian public — which the author would not presume to attempt to instruct—but for the great number of people who, while interested in our great dependency, have no actual experience of it. To these, it is trusted, some of the contained matter may prove not uninteresting, and may indeed perhaps serve to throw a side-light on certain thoughts, customs, and beliefs existing in that country; thoughts, customs, and beliefs mysterious and almost unintelligible to Western minds, but a correct understanding of which is all-essential for the satisfactory ad-

ministration of the affairs of this amiable and docile, but ignorant and suspicious, people.

The frontispiece is from a sketch made by the author's daughter, Miss Dorothy Thomson, and the illustrations are from photographs taken by his valued friend Mrs Ada Corbett Wilson—sympathetic helpers to whom he tenders his best thanks.

S. J. THOMSON.

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THE REAL INDIAN PEOPLE.

THE EARLY HISTORY AND RELIGION OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE.

In a work which attempts, however feebly, to throw a faint light on some of the thoughts and feelings of the masses of India, it may perhaps serve, as it were, to clear the ground and help towards a better understanding of their time-honoured customs and beliefs, if a few facts regarding the origin, early history, and religion of such people are set forth, though the writer is fully aware of the difficulties which attend an undertaking of the kind. Not much profit, it is true, attends such a consideration in the case of Western races, since immigrations, invasions, and wanderings of various kinds, have resulted in so many complex blendings of peoples that most of the earlier habits and operations

of the mind of any particular stock have either been forgotten or have become merged in one general whole. But the conditions in India are quite different, and although the expression "the changeless East" has lost much of its appropriateness, still here such ancient institutions as caste, the village family system, the worship of ancestors, &c.—heritages from a past at least two or three thousand years distant—have persisted with very few modifications up to the present time, and profoundly affect the thoughts and daily life of the great majority of the inhabitants of the land to-day. Such an almost unbroken continuity of traditions, customs and beliefs is found hardly anywhere else, and the consideration of how they originated is therefore not only worthy of study for itself, but should also serve to afford some explanation of the rather puzzling attitude usually adopted by Indians towards Western schemes, projects and innovations. Whether we be believers in modern theories regarding the force of heredity or not, we must at least acknowledge that if there be anything in such theories at all, nowhere are such forces likely to be more strongly operating than in a country like India, which has been so isolated until quite recent times, and where the population has been so little subjected to the disturbing

influences of frequent and extensive immigrations of outside peoples. As ethnologists and others have pointed out, it is quite easy to recognise, even to-day, whole masses of people presenting the almost typical physical characteristics of distinct and very ancient races—from the fair virile people of the north-west to the almost pure Dravidians of central and southern India. And with such physicial characteristics they have very much preserved the particular thoughts and beliefs of their distant forebears. The origin of a people must always be interesting. As Horace has it in one of his Odes (IV. 4):—

> "The brave and good are copies of their kind;
> In steers laborious and in generous steeds
> We trace their sires; nor can the bird of Jove,
> Intrepid, fierce, beget th' unwarlike dove."

The very large number of persons who, without having actually visited India, are nevertheless greatly interested in it, have become accustomed to hearing its inhabitants described as our Aryan brethren, and are moreover fully aware that there was a time when this country, in common with a good deal of the East, was apparently far more civilised than were any portions of the West at the same period. They note, too, the intelligence of such Indians as visit Europe, read with some surprise the eloquent speeches of Oriental political

reformers, and are quite naturally prepared to regard our great dependency as the home of a collection of peoples who have not only inherited the culture and ideals of a very ancient civilisation, but are also to some extent related to ourselves. Such a land and such a population might be quite reasonably expected to present an attractive and promising field for the efforts of the apostles of progress, and it is therefore somewhat disappointing to these to learn how primitive in thought and feeling, and how averse to adopting Western notions and methods, the great majority of the people really are — how persistently and contentedly they cling to beliefs and traditions, many of which seem so extravagant to ourselves — and how, indeed, the progressive and enterprising characteristics which we associate with our conception of the Aryan race are usually so conspicuously absent among them. It may perhaps, therefore, be not uninstructive to consider how far we are justified in forming such expectations as those referred to.

It is of course perfectly true, as every one knows, that the Aryan (Arya — "noble") immigrants into Europe, Persia (Iran), and India were branches of the same stock, which had its home of origin somewhere in Central Asia — probably to the east of the Caspian Sea and north

of the Hindu Kush range of mountains. The descendants of the branch which passed into Europe and are represented more or less by the Greek, Latin, Celtic, Teutonic, and Slavonic peoples, have preserved the distinguishing marks and physical and mental characteristics of the Caucasian or White race, to which the Aryans belonged, almost intact; but this is not, save in a few instances, the case with the descendants of the branches which passed into Persia and India—and this renders the history of the last, after their arrival in their new home, a matter of far more than "merely" ethnological interest. Such history unfortunately is little more than conjecture, but still we have certain ancient records at our disposal, from a perusal and consideration of which, supplemented by the results of the labours of ethnologists and philologists, we are able to draw in our minds some sort of picture of the life, appearance, beliefs, &c., of these Aryan invaders, and to form some notion of the course of events which probably followed their occupation of the new land.

So far as at this distance of time we are able to discern, it seems that bands of tall fair men of some considerable culture and intelligence did, perhaps some time in the second millennium B.C., pass into India from such Central Asian centre;

journeying, as some think, *viâ* Bactria over the Hindu Kush and down the Cabul river, until they crossed the Indus. But it appears more likely that, being to a great extent a pastoral people, they just wandered from their home of origin with their wives, children, flocks and herds, through the easiest passes into the new country—as the Hebrews did into Palestine. There is reason to suppose that in those distant times the routes they probably traversed, such as south-eastern Persia and the tracts to the north, as well as the Punjab itself which they eventually reached, were much better wooded and watered and afforded much better grazing than they do to-day. It would seem that, having arrived there, they settled down in the country, were reinforced at intervals by further immigrations of their own people, and gradually extended their wanderings down the western and central portions of the Indo-Gangetic plain, occupying the areas now known as Rajputana, the Punjab, and (later) the United Provinces. It is noticeable that caste has always sat lightly on the residents in north-western India, and perhaps this may be taken to indicate that these earliest settlers, marrying among themselves and with women of the same race, were never called upon to the same degree as elsewhere to take steps to preserve the purity of their blood.

Ethnologically and linguistically they have, even up to the present time, retained most of the Aryan characteristics. A good deal of evidence points to the probability that we must regard this first immigration of the white race into India as a quite separate incident from any which occurred later. It is the stock from which the Rajputs, Khattris, Jats, and the upper classes in Kashmir, are derived.

But further east and south-east we have an area where different conditions to those obtaining in the Punjab and Rajputana appear to have presently prevailed. This area, loosely known as Hindustan, "the place of the Hindus," the sacred "Midland" of the later Vedic hymns and Sanskrit geography, extended from about Delhi, on the eastern side of the Punjab, in the west, to about three or four hundred miles below Benares, in the east, and is bounded on the north by the foot-hills of the Himalayan mountains, and on the south by the Vindhyan range. Here it was that most of the Vedic hymns were composed, that Brahmanism was established, and caste came into being. Here the important cities of Kanouj, Delhi, and holy Mathura were situated, and here it was that the great battles with which we are familiar in the old Hindu epics, the Mahabharata and Ramayana, were fought. It was what

Americans would call the "hub" of civilisation in ancient India, and it is with the origin, constitution, history, customs and beliefs of its population that we are now more particularly concerned.

Recent ethnologists, like Sir Herbert Risley and others, divide the inhabitants of India into seven main physical types. Firstly, the Turko-Iranian, such as we see among the Beloochees, Brahuis, and Afghans, who are probably the result of a Turki and Persian fusion—Muhammadans in faith, and hardly Indians at all. Secondly, the Indo-Aryan, such as we find in the Punjab, Rajputana, Kashmir, and in scattered colonies elsewhere, which closely approximates to the true Aryan type. Thirdly, the Scytho-Dravidian, which is represented by the Mahrattas, and is possibly due to intermarriages of Scythian marauding immigrants with the aboriginal race. Fourthly, the Aryo-Dravidian, represented by the people who inhabited the "Midland" referred to, and who will be considered in more detail later. Fifthly, the Mongolo-Dravidian or Bengalee type, which seems to be derived from a blend of Tibetan or Burmese people with the Dravidian race—leavened, it is true, with a little Aryan blood. Sixthly, the Mongoloid, which we find in the Himalayas, Nepal, Burmah and Assam—folk something like

the Japanese, but inferior to them in energy and intellect. And seventhly and lastly, the Dravidian, by far the most common type, and represented by the aboriginal people, who were perhaps the true autochthenes of the country. These aborigines, whom the Aryans found in possession, appear to have been a very dark, degraded race, whom the comparatively fair invaders called "Dasyus," "black-skins," "fiends," and other terms of dislike and contempt. They were probably of the much-enduring Turanian stock—that stock which seems to have such a faculty for rising to a certain height in the intellectual scale and then halting—and had, it is surmised by some, in former times themselves ousted a Negritic people from the land. To-day, nearly the whole of the south of India is inhabited by a race with well-marked Dravidian characters, and in the highlands of Central India some of the jungle tribes are still little removed from what they probably were when the Aryans first crossed the Indus.

As already mentioned, the Indo-Aryans in the Punjab, Rajputana and Kashmir were, and are, almost pure Aryans. We may picture their distant forefathers as people passing from the pastoral to the agricultural stage; living on grain, milk, clarified butter, and—*horribile dictu*—probably flesh; for we know that at their marriage

feasts the menu included beef. They kept horses and cattle, used gold and copper (though probably not silver or iron), drove chariots, fought among themselves, got drunk on beer, and in various ways exhibited indications of having attained to some degree of civilisation. They had a priesthood, which was not, however, hereditary—Brahmans are mentioned in the Vedas, but as ministers and not as hereditary priests. There was no seclusion of women—these sharing the lives of the men and choosing their own husbands. Kingship was sometimes hereditary, sometimes by election. Leading features in the social system were the worship of ancestors (the Pitris), and the constitution of the family, in which the authority of the father was supreme, as the unit of society. Both these features have come down to modern times almost unchanged. The late Mr Romesh Chunder Dutt has painted a rosy picture of the life of the earlier Aryans in India which is perhaps somewhat over-coloured, and probably Sir Thomas Holderness is much nearer the mark in conceiving these tribal communities to have been not unlike the Celtic and Teutonic tribes from whom the nations of western Europe are descended.

When, however, we move eastward, we find something like an ethnical barrier set up between the peoples inhabiting western and eastern Hindu-

stan, the "land of the Hindus" or the "Midland." The two races seem to have recognised no bonds of kinship or common origin—the Vedas make no reference to any prior invasions by Aryans of the Punjab or elsewhere. Indeed we know the relations between them were inimical, and Sir George Grierson goes so far as to suggest that the antagonism finds its reflection in the fabled hostility between the priests Visvamitra and Vasishta, and the great war described in the Mahabharata between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. For some reason there was a great gulf fixed between them, and Dr Hoernle, to the writer's mind very plausibly, suggests an explanation of this state of affairs. He thinks that there was a later Aryan immigration into the "Midland" than that into the Punjab, and of quite a different character—for whereas the first invaders brought their wives and children with them, those who subsequently passed into the former part of the country came *viâ* Chitral and Gilgit, where the difficult passes and rugged tracks made the journey quite impossible for women and young folk. As a consequence, the later arrivals formed connections with the Dravidian women they found in the country—just as American planters once did with the more attractive female slaves, and probably regarded and treated them in much the same way. It is a

reasonable assumption that the women they mated with were the handsomest, best proportioned, and most intelligent they could find among the people they had subdued, but, as was inevitable, the racial type became no doubt materially altered, and Aryan thoughts and beliefs were presently largely modified or superseded by those of the people with whom they were thus intimately associated. Even at the present time the population of the area referred to may be described as a blend of Aryan and Dravidian peoples—where the characteristics of the former are most prominent among the higher, as the latter are among the lower, classes. But in view of the remarkable amount of culture and intellectual ability which characterised this somewhat heterogeneous population, we must conclude that, even allowing for immigrations from the Punjab into this area, probably these later immigrations were large and well sustained, and that the Aryan element was very strong among at least the more powerful and influential members of the community. This tract of country was the fount of all light and learning in those distant times, and from this centre flowed waves of more or less civilised thought as emigrants from it passed into adjoining lands; though, as might be expected, the habits, customs, and religion of the wanderers, as also the racial type,

deteriorated as they travelled farther from their home, and became more and more subjected to the influence of an aboriginal environment. Still it probably was this surplus population of the "Midland" which tended, far more than did the purer one to the north, to raise the physical and intellectual status of the population of Upper India as a whole. Speaking generally, we seem to see, at the period of the dawn of anything like history or tradition in India, some such picture as this. In the north-west there was a nearly pure, flourishing Aryan community, breeding with women of its own race, proud, conservative in thought, and standing more or less isolated at first on its defence—though sending out (in possibly later times) bands of enterprising colonists who settled, not only in the "Midland," but also in even distant parts of the country; as we see evidence of in Southern India, Assam, and elsewhere. Down the Indo-Gangetic valley and in the "Midland" was established a mixed race of Aryan men and Dravidian women, in which, however, the intelligent and enterprising Aryan element predominated; and this, gradually expanding and overflowing into surrounding lands, became modified as regards physique and mental characteristics as the result of close contact with the aboriginal populations into whose domains

it had penetrated. With the exception of Mongolian strains in the east and in the highlands to the north, the rest of the population of India was at that time almost purely Dravidian. There is no doubt that the superior Aryan race left a marked and permanent impress on the people; but still, as Dr Haddon says in his 'Wanderings of Peoples,' the aboriginal elements were prepotent, and the so-called Aryan conquest was more a moral and intellectual one than a substitution of the white man for the dark-skinned peoples—that it was, indeed, more social than racial.

The conceptions we are able to form regarding the origin, habits, customs, religion and early history of Indian peoples are derived from the facts observed by ethnologists and philologists, and from a perusal and consideration of certain ancient books and records. Of these last, the most valuable are the Vedas; and especially the Rig-Veda, which bears internal evidence of being the oldest of them all. This is generally held to have been compiled somewhere about 1500 B.C., though the oldest Sanskrit MSS. we possess are of far more recent date; but with regard to all these ancient religious and semi-religious works (which also contain a large quantity of law and precept), we must remember that from very distant times it has been the custom among the

priesthood of India to commit large portions of the sacred hymns, texts and instructions to memory, and to thus transmit the knowledge of them to posterity. So carefully and thoroughly is this done that there is a strong presumption that the matter contained in the works at our disposal really represents the thoughts and ideas existing long antecedent to the time of the compilation of the actual records themselves—the dates of the appearance of which have consequently little more than an academic interest. Tradition has it that Brahma wrote the Vedas on leaves of gold—probably they actually were in remote times traced with steel instruments something like the Roman "stylus," upon leaves of plants, or, as Nearchus says, "on cotton well beaten together"; though such perishable records have of course long since decayed and disappeared. No doubt later a reed split at the end was used as a pen. The Indian word "kalam" has the same meaning as "calamus," a reed, in Latin, and the term also appears in Egyptian hieroglyphs. When and by whom the art of writing was invented it is now impossible to say, but it must have been practised, at least in a pictorial form, in very distant times indeed — probably long before the days of the Phœnicians. Josephus has a curious conceit that it is older than the Flood; surmising that the

principles of science and other useful knowledge must have been engraved on pillars of stone, to be so preserved for the instruction of post-diluvian man. The belief of Hindus that the sutures in the skull are the handwriting of Brahma in which he has recorded the fate of the individual, is a very very old one, and the fact may be held to be an indirect proof of the antiquity of the art among this people.

Vedic literature, or what Hindus call "the Veda" or divine knowledge, the matter in which is held to have been "sruti," or revealed, to a succession of Brahman sages ("rishis") who handed it on orally and at length committed it to writing, comprises the four Vedas—collections of hymns, and texts of praise and prayer, and of which the chief is the Rig-Veda — and the more recent, but still very ancient, partially prose, works, the Brahmanas and Upanishads; which are more or less commentaries on, and explanations of, the Vedas, and deal with ceremonial, sacrifices, and mystic doctrines concerning psychology and ontology. The last two are supposed to date from 800 to 500 B.C. — a period of remarkable religious activity, for it is the age of Pythagoras, Zoroaster, and Confucius. Later on, we have what is known as post-Vedic literature, comprising the Dharma S'astras, of which the most

celebrated is the code known as the Institutes of Menu—and the Bhakti-S'astras. The former are really law books and collections of rules relating to magic, law, religion, customs, ritual, and metaphysics, and lay especial stress on the life to be led by Brahmans, and on caste and its observances. The Bhakti-S'astras deal with beliefs held when the Hindu pantheon had been enormously enlarged by the adoption of primitive deities as the result of contact with the aboriginal races, and include the Puranas, or "ancient" books, and the Tantras. The actual dates of the compilation of all these are unknown, but this is not particularly important, because they doubtless describe thoughts and opinions prevalent hundreds of years before they were issued as records to the world. It should be mentioned that these post-Vedic works are regarded, not as "sruti" or revealed, but as "smriti" or traditional, and are held to have been compiled by human, though inspired, writers, to supplement and illustrate the original revelation. The late Rev. Dr G. M. Grant, in his little book 'The Religions of the World,' admirably sums up the sequence and character of these different works. "The four Vedas," he writes, "represent the first phase of the religion of India, and contain the germs of all future developments. The Brah-

manas and Upanishads, with the philosophical systems and the Law Books, represent the second phase, and extend over the period when Brahmanism was fully developed and existed side by side with Buddhism. The great epics, revised by the Brahmans from the theological point of view, represent the next phase, when the doctrine of Incarnation became prominent. The eighteen Puranas, written subsequently, and the Tantras —a later development of the Puranas, intended to give prominence to the worship of the female energy of some god, especially the wife of Shiva in one of her many forms—represent the modern and sectarian phase of this astonishingly luxuriant religion."

For the purpose, however, with which we are now more immediately concerned — that is, to ascertain what were the life, thoughts, and religion of the Aryan immigrants—we must rely, as said before, on the oldest record in the collection,—the 1028 hymns of the Rig-Veda. The early creed of this race appears to have been one of some beauty. Max Müller in 'Sanskrit Literature' calls it "an instinctive monotheism." It seems to have been really an elevated form of nature-worship, in which the Sun, the Sky, the Dawn, the Storm, &c., were adored as deities, but with a great omnipotent Presence, whom its

votaries did not presume to attempt to describe, presiding over all. It is, however, very difficult to be certain from the Vedas what the real faith of this people was. In one hymn, Agni the god of fire, in another, Indra the god of rain, and in yet another, Surya the sun, are spoken of as supreme. Max Müller calls this "henotheism," or the worship of one god at a time, but it would seem to have been more like a pantheism than anything. Phenomena connected with light especially attracted them — the gods were "the bright ones"—Deva or Dyaus—the Dyaus Pitar or Jupiter, of the Romans, and Zeus of the Greeks, &c. Here and there some very fine conceptions are met with, as that of Yama the god of death, who, though immortal, chose to die,—"to show the way to many." The Abbé Dubois, writing in 1817 under the patronage of the Honourable East India Company, who, living among the people like one of themselves, possessed an intimate knowledge of them and a considerable acquaintance with their sacred works—and who, moreover, as a Christian priest was not likely to be prejudiced in favour of such tenets—says in his interesting work, "To use the words of the Philosophers of India, God is an Immaterial Being, pure and unmixed, without form or division; the Lord and Master of all things.

He extends over all, sees all, knows all, directs all; without beginning and without end. Power, strength, and gladness dwell with Him." He adds somewhat later in his book, referring to the Hinduism of his own time, "This is but a slight sketch of the lofty terms in which the Hindu writings, after their Philosophers, describe the Para-Brahma, or Supreme Being. But it is painful to see these sublime attributes unworthily profaned by prostituting them to the false gods of the country and blending them with innumerable other attributes as ridiculous and absurd as the fables to which they are attached. The earliest of these philosophers, maintaining ideas of a Godhead so pure, in all probability never strayed into the absurdities of polytheism and idolatry."

We gather, however, from the evidence at our disposal, that this early creed of the Aryans, never more than the property of the few, was presently displaced by Brahmanism, with its concrete gods and goddesses of whom Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and their consorts were the chief, its sacrifices and ceremonial, its veneration for the semi-divine Brahman priesthood, its caste system, its doctrines of transmigration of souls, &c. Exactly when and how this actually occurred must be a matter of conjecture. The

Rig-Veda, and its supplement the Sama-Veda, are supposed to have been composed when the Aryans had reached the junction of the Punjab rivers with the Indus, and the Black and White Yajur-Veda when they reached the Sutlej and Jumna; but the later Atharva-Veda contains so much of the lower beliefs of the aboriginal races, that it would seem to point to an Aryo-Dravidian, rather than an Aryan, source. The Brahmanas, digests of dicta on matters of ritual for the guidance of Brahmanical priests, mark a new departure in religious thought, as do also the Upanishads, and both almost certainly date from a time when the Aryans and Aryo-Dravidians were occupying the sacred "Midland," and the Brahman priesthood had become hereditary. The changes indicated in these works were probably not violent ones, nor were the new beliefs uniform in character. The teachings of the Brahmanas (*circa* 600 B.C.) differ very much from those inculcated in the Upanishads, which apparently date from a somewhat later period. In the former, the necessity for sacrifices, and the veneration of Brahmans (without whose assistance such sacrifices could not be performed), are emphasised; but the latter teach the futility of such proceedings and insist on the foremost requirement of knowledge—this knowledge being

as to how the individual soul may escape from earthly existence by absorption into the world-soul (Atman or Brahma), the eternal essence animating nature. The more philosophic form of belief probably foreshadowed the succeeding Buddhism; which was to a considerable extent a revolt from Brahmanism, but which nevertheless borrowed a good deal from the older faith, and no doubt the two creeds always ran more or less side by side. The doctrine of "karma" (action), which teaches that a man in his present life inherits the results of well or ill doing in a former existence, and rises or falls in a future one according to his conduct, is a Buddhist conception. When Sakya-Muni, or Gautama Buddha ("the illumined," and a very lofty character), had, in the sixth century before Christ, preached the new doctrine which bade each man be "a light to himself"—and especially when King Asoka, some two hundred years later, had embraced it—Buddhism became regarded as the orthodox religion of the land, and remained so for over a thousand years. But it proved too emotionless, formal, tedious and ceremonial to be popular with the masses, became corrupted, and eventually, together with Jainism (a belief of similar character and of about the same antiquity), almost entirely passed away—when Hinduism, or the new Brah-

manism, with its vast pantheon of non-Aryan deities, and semi-animistic doctrines which appeal so largely to fear and love of the marvellous, finally triumphed, and persists with very few striking alterations or changes to the present time, despite the occurrence of schisms and the fierce buffetings of Muhammadanism. It is, speaking generally, a blend of the old Brahmanism and Buddhism, founded on the Vedas, and considerably adulterated with Animism. It is really more a social system than a creed—every detail of a Hindu's life is regulated by his religion; he can hardly move without some act of worship or propitiation, and customs with him are almost parts of a ritual. To-day, as a matter of fact, the scriptures with which the lower classes are most familiar and upon which they principally base their beliefs, are the Puranas, and the great epic poems the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, with their attractive heroes Krishna and Rama deified as incarnations of Vishnu. They worship, it is true, the great Brahmanic gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva (especially the two latter), who supplanted the Vedic nature gods, and also, in some localities, Shiva's dread consort Durga or Kali,—wearing lines of pigment, differently traced, on their foreheads, to denote their allegiance to the one

they prefer—but Rama and Krishna are perhaps, except in Bengal, the most popular gods. Their exploits form a theme of conversation and discussion in every Indian hut. The epics not only describe these, but also reproduce the spiritual and speculative ideas of the early sages. The poet and religious reformer Tulsi Das, at the end of the sixteenth century adapted the Ramayana to the speech of the people with extraordinary power and ability, and his work is almost the Bible of the rural classes in India to-day.

No Hindu can define Hinduism, for the simple reason that it is undefinable. The term includes the refined Vedantist of towns, the students of the Bhagavadgita, down through various gradations to the half-wild resident of the jungles still clinging obstinately to his forest godlets, shades, and spirits. It is the most eclectic religion in the world, and its followers can choose their particular objects of worship from among thousands of gods and goddesses. But the leaders demand obedience (not always very strictly enforced) to certain definite articles of faith, and these are—veneration of Brahmans; belief in the doctrine of "karma"; the transmigration of souls; the holiness of the cow; and the observance of caste. The last, as the Brahmans well know, is by far the most im-

portant in holding the religion together and maintaining their authority; and consequently they are the people who are, at heart, most opposed to innovations which tend to interfere with or destroy this and other customs which, as said before, are at present virtually religious observances. It is caste which has kept Hinduism together for over two thousand years—has arrested the complete absorption of the Aryan element—has almost nullified the effects of immigrations—and which has incidentally prevented the formation of a nation and retarded the material and commercial progress of the people. At the same time (if we are inclined to credit the accounts of Megasthenes, Arrian, and others) it has not precluded in the past the establishment of powerful and well-conducted dynasties and kingdoms, and also the observance of a high ethical code, and it is undoubtedly to-day a great factor in evoking sympathy and action for the common good, and the maintenance of the traditional moral law. It is no slight thing for a man to feel that he is not an isolated unit, but a member of a community which, while to a considerable extent controlling his actions, will nevertheless protect his interests, and even succour him in distress. Much water will run under the bridge before its abolition. There is nowadays a tendency to be less scrupulous

about food and diet—due no doubt to the increase of railway travelling, &c.—but, on the other hand, regarding the all-important question of extra-caste marriages, rules are perhaps more stringent than ever — especially among the middle and lower classes. It is by no accident that different sections and divisions of a people have lived contentedly and amicably side by side for so many generations — practically without ever intermarrying, and clinging persistently, and even proudly, to customs and occupations which differentiate them from their neighbours of the same race and faith. Caste, Brahmanism, and the Hindu religion are inextricably bound up together—they must stand or fall as one.

As to how caste originated, this has been the subject of much discussion, and considerable ingenuity and erudition have been brought to bear on the question. Some would take it to have been a matter of occupation—some as due to the extraordinary exaltation of the priestly office in India—while others (pointing to analogies in Greece and Rome) would regard it simply as an extension of the Aryan family system, and the desire on the part of the few and scattered Aryans to preserve themselves as a separate race by doctrines anent descent and purity of blood. But perhaps it was merely due to the old and ap-

parently almost ineradicable antagonism between white and black, — the original Sanskrit word "varna" stands for both "caste" and "colour." Castes are at present classified by authorities as of tribal, occupational, national, and sectarian types; and those formed by migration, crossing, or changes of custom. But all these causes operated in later times when caste was systematised and had become an integral part of Hinduism. What we want to know is as to how it really had its birth. It is not mentioned in the Rig-Veda, and was unknown among the earlier Aryans, and there is little doubt that it first appeared in the "Middle land" when the loftier race had crossed with the lower Dravidian people. It does not seem difficult to conceive that in the midst of a greatly preponderating aboriginal one, the ruling race, the Aryan, presently found it necessary in self-defence to place definite social barriers between itself and its darker neighbours. Very soon, we may imagine, the population had become largely Aryo-Dravidian, and, when Aryan immigrations ceased, the tendency to revert to an almost purely Dravidian type and line of thought became greater and greater. What actually occurred is unknown, but the probability is that at this juncture the wiser men among the ruling classes saw the necessity of establishing what was the germ of the

caste system—forbidding members of the community with Aryan blood in their veins, from intermarrying or forming connections with pure aborigines. It must have been difficult however by this time, to ascertain what degree of purity of Aryan blood existed in an individual, and some test or standard had to be invented and adopted. This standard most probably was *colour*—coupled, it may be, with certain other physical characteristics, such as narrowness of base of nose, &c. Social ordinances and customs, we know, are apt to be disregarded where the affections are concerned, and something more repressive than public opinion was required. The chances are that the ruling race, dealing with a crude and superstitious population, had quite early usurped Levitical functions as a means of retaining power, and we know that in the "Midland" (as in Egypt and Mesopotamia) the priests took precedence of warriors and all other classes of the people. It was not long, it is surmised, before the system of caste received the sanction of religion, and was taught and enforced as of divine origin. Still, it was necessary to conciliate powerful and influential peoples outside the sacerdotal pale, and so we have the divisions into the Brahmans or priests, the Kshattriyas or warriors, and the Vaishyas or traders, who also practised husbandry—all "twice

born" men, wearing the sacred thread, and of the elect. Below these, and at a great distance, we have the Sudras—the "remainder"—probably the darkest people, nearly, if not quite, aboriginal in origin. Their position was extremely low—the penalty for taking the life of a Sudra was the same as that for killing a dog. After all, as has been already suggested, it seems to have been the old old question of "racial prejudice" resolved into a system. The earliest Brahmans were probably the whitest, strongest, and "brainiest" among the people, and there seems no reason to suppose that they were not influenced by a desire to do what they conceived to be their duty. Some Indians have called us "the Brahmans of the Kali-yuga"—which, by the way, is the age in which nearly everything is wrong, and justice and right have become completely disregarded. The term is rather neat, but of somewhat double-barrelled significance.

In this way, the present writer conjectures, caste probably originated. Later on, when the idea had become generally adopted and part of religious belief, extensions of the system took place, and gave rise to castes among the lower classes—owing their formation to causes and events already referred to, and most likely encouraged by the "twice born" men as likely to make the multi-

tude more tolerant of their own exclusiveness, by the introduction of a system of particularisation among all grades of society, which was calculated to please the people and flatter its self-respect. But much of its present rigidity probably dates from the time when Hinduism finally supplanted Buddhism.

In considering all the phases and varieties of belief to which at one time and another the people of India and other ancient civilisations have become attached, there is one point not to be forgotten by the practical student. If we turn to the hieroglyphs and papyri of Egypt, we recognise that the Osirian cult was a lofty one. If we consider the Babylonian religion and the worship of Bel-Merodach as revealed by the cuneiform inscriptions, we are struck with its almost monotheistic character. If we accept the testimony of the Rig-Veda, we admire and respect many of the teachings of the old Aryan leaders. When we reflect upon the metaphysical and often profound speculations of the early Brahmans, we seem to see the workings of the mind of a deeply religious people striving to find light. But what we have to remember is that what all these ancient writings convey to us, is not a presentment of the thoughts and beliefs of the masses, but only those of a few gifted and wise men among them. The lower

classes in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India probably all went their own way with the worship of animal gods, ghosts, spirits, and sylvan deities—sometimes amiable but more usually the reverse—and of what the common people really thought or believed we know very little indeed. We may fairly conjecture, however, that the greater portion of the masses held on tenaciously to its own primitive and animistic conceptions, without any particular regard for the tenets and metaphysical speculations of the Brahman authorities — though, perhaps, indeed, acknowledging a nominal obedience to them. Such old beliefs are very difficult to eradicate. We notice the persistence of venerable superstitions and ideas among ourselves even to-day. It is not so long ago that the body of the suicide was pinned down by a stake passed through it at the four cross-roads, lest its spirit (which is particularly restless) should be tempted to wander—or if it did so, might be puzzled as to which road to take. Some of us, too, would be surprised to hear that when we address the "harmless necessary cat" by the name of "puss" we are unconsciously invoking the old Egyptian goddess Pasht, to whom the animal was sacred! The crude beliefs of the multitude in India could not be ignored. The time probably came when it was obvious to the Brahman priesthood that, if

they were to retain any hold on the lower classes, it was necessary to propound more eclectic doctrines, and to countenance ideas and beliefs which they were unable to destroy—and herein perhaps lies the explanation of how Brahmanism eventually assumed such a degenerate form. The attitude of compromise suggested by the collection of spells, incantations, and exorcisms which is known as the Atharva-Veda, appears to support this view. Political, apart from other, considerations were no doubt largely operating in the matter. The intention was to bring every man, no matter what his religious conceptions might be, as far as possible into one fold—a policy, it may be noted, which is still a characteristic feature of Hinduism at the present time. It is by far the most popular and extensive religion in the land. The clear-cut, stringent, definite tenets held by the followers of the Prophet, have never had any great attraction for the Indian people with its metaphysical turn of mind—Muhammadans, owing to their wiser social habits, are increasing, but Islam, though gaining steadily by conversion, does so but slowly. The secret of the success of Hinduism is its all-embracing toleration. It is a comfort to the coolie, pariah, or jungle dweller to be able to bring his old rural gods and godlets along with him when he enlists under his new religious

banner. As a matter of fact, indeed, the average rustic, while recognising the omnipotence and majesty of the Great Gods, usually employs a kindly local deity to look after his ordinary affairs—and does not neglect at the same time to propitiate others with a less amiable reputation. But what he does believe, he very firmly believes, and, as said before, his religion will enter into every detail of his daily life.

In what he has stated in the present chapter, the author has endeavoured to show that the Indian people as a whole is far more Dravidian than Aryan in origin and type, and that, except in a few instances and localities, we are not dealing with a people so closely connected with ourselves that we have any reasonable ground for expecting it to look at things from our own point of view. It holds religious convictions, and is guided by customs, of great antiquity, and as far removed from our own as the poles are from one another. If, then, the opinions set forth be accepted, little surprise need be excited by the difficulty experienced in inducing the Indian masses to adopt Western innovations. We are really dealing with a people largely derived from the patient, rather sluggish, but amiable Dravidian stock, and we are asking it to abandon habits and customs which it commonly does not regard as

such, but as time-honoured and important details of religious observance. In towns and cities where the somewhat bemused student has contrived somehow to plaster over his earlier convictions with a layer of Western thoughts and ideas, we have attained, it is true, to some measure of success in this endeavour as the result of higher education; but among the rural classes (at least two-thirds of the population and the people with whom the present writer is more particularly concerned) we have failed up to the present, except in a few localities, to do much more than touch the fringe of the matter.

A MORNING MARCH.

It is a very pleasant experience in India to wake up in the early morning during the cold weather, in your tent in camp. The hurricane-lamp hanging from the tent-pole throws a dim light over the interior; but the singing of birds, the clanging scream of the great red-headed "sarus" crane which heralds the dawn from some field close by, the bubbling of camels, the neighing of horses, and the barking of impatient tethered dogs, all tell you that day has broken, and that the whole camp is astir. The "khidmutgar," or table servant, who has been clearing his throat and stating that "the little breakfast has come" for some ten minutes outside, now enters bearing a cup of hot tea and some buttered toast; and, when raising the entrance curtain of the tent, lets in a flood of sunshine and a delightful wave of fresh, pure morning air. A very short time suffices for your ablutions and the donning of the disreputable-looking but comfortable camping kit. Your

appearance when you sally forth is greeted with a whinny from the horse standing ready saddled in charge of the groom; there is a chorus of excited barks from the dogs; the orderly salutes and makes his report; and the tent-pitchers run up to dismantle your domicile, and pack it and the rest of the impedimenta on the camels, to be conveyed to the next camping-ground, to which the other tents, &c., have already been despatched overnight. There is a fresh cool breeze blowing; the sun shines brightly but not fiercely in a cloudless sky; all nature smiles, and it is a poor heart indeed that does not rejoice in such bracing surroundings. It is rather too cold to make riding pleasant just yet, so we determine to walk awhile—the dog-boy leading the pack on leashes, and the groom in charge of the nag carrying a gun and cartridges; while the orderly, bestowing his pipe and tobacco in a string bag over one shoulder, arms himself with a rifle and bandolier. And so we start.

The country road along which we are travelling, though an important one, is very different to a country road in England. It is a broad grass-grown track, with a little raised mud elevation, about a foot or eighteen inches high, running down the centre. On one side of this, the great heavy carts, mostly constructed of bamboo

A country road.

and string and drawn by patient bullocks and buffaloes, wend their leisurely way along, bearing the produce of the fields to market, and ploughing great furrows in the soil with their heavy groaning wheels—while on the other is a better kept track for the use of lighter, faster vehicles, and pedestrians. On both sides of the road itself is a line of fairly lofty trees, the welcome shade of which makes journeying comparatively comfortable for wayfarers in the hot season. The maintenance and protection of these avenues, and the replacing of any trees which may die, is one of the many duties of the Public Works Department. They include the useful mango, with its luscious fruit which all the countryside seems to be eating when it ripens in May or June; the "neem" (*Melia azadirachta*), the berries and sap of which are held in esteem as a remedy for fever; the "babool" (*Acacia arabica*), with its little golden balls of fragrant flowerets; the "sirrus," with its long, dry, rattling pods, which make so much noise when shaken by the wind that they are not allowed to be grown near jails for fear that the patrolling warders may not be able to hear an escaping prisoner; the "mohwa" (*Bassia latifolia*), so valuable as a source of food supply, and greatly beloved of bears; the "sheeshum" (*Dalbergia sissoo*), with its excellent

timber; the "pakur," with its hairy excrescences and heavy foliage; the "jamun" (*Eugenia jambolana*), with its purple plum-like fruit; the "gola," with its little figs which all birds, especially the green pigeons, delight in,—and many others. Round about their roots and on their limbs gambol a great number of the striped grey squirrels, chased by the released terriers who have as much chance of catching them as they would have with a flash of lightning. They are impudent little animals—indeed the dark lines they bear on their backs are inherited from an ancestor who hid in a cleft when Rama, on his way to rescue his wife Seeta from the demon Ravana, passed over the bridge which Hanuman, the monkey-god, had helped to build between India and Ceylon; with the result that the cheeky intruder got blasted down the back by the foot of the deity, and his descendants carry the marks to this day. But a rather prettier legend, common in Southern India, is that a squirrel helped in the construction of the bridge by rolling in the sand and carrying this in his hairy coat to the clefts between the stones to be made into mortar; and that Rama, pleased with this, sympathetically stroked his back with three fingers, and hence the distinction he now carries. Here too, picking about in the dust,

there are pretty sure to be some of the fussy, noisy little "babblers" (*Crateropus canorus*), a kind of ground thrush — usually in parties of about seven in number, and hence known as the "seven brothers" — ashy-grey in colour, with bright yellow eyes, and never quiet or still for a moment. Very likely a mungoose will rush across the road on his way to his hole in some neighbouring sandy bank or ravine — his long grey body flecked with black and his little brown pointed head and nose, close to the ground; his rather sinister yellowish eyes keenly on the look-out for danger; and the hairs on his body and long thick tail all standing on end like a bottle-brush with alarm and excitement. The dogs are not likely to catch him; he had stood on his hind-legs and carefully looked round before he made his dash, and no animal is quicker or sharper. If he gets into trouble, it will be on account of his insatiable curiosity. For their size, he and the wild pig are probably the pluckiest animals alive. He makes, if caught young, a most interesting pet, and is, moreover, not likely to let any wandering snakes enter your dwelling.

On the branches, or among the foliage of the trees, are numerous birds. The common "myna" (*Acridotheres tristis*), closely allied to our star-

lings, but with glossy-black head, breast and tail, and with the rest of the plumage brown shading to white below the body, is sure to be there. He has many notes, some musical and some the reverse, and can be taught to speak; though not so well as his cousins in the hills. The writer calls to mind one of the latter, a wag in his way, who lived in a cage suspended high on the wall of the departure platform of a small wayside railway station. It is the custom of the simple village folk using such a convenience, to arrive an hour or two before the train is due, and to then lie down and sleep on the platform with their belongings until the native porter calls out to inform the intending passengers that the train is coming in. The bird soon learnt the regular form of this warning, and so soon as he had a respectable audience, would shout out "Get up, get up, the train is coming." The aroused and startled travellers, blissfully indifferent to time and quite prepared for any possible vagaries in the mysterious management of the traffic, would jump up, seize their impedimenta, and rush wildly about the platform looking out for the expected conveyances—while the presumably delighted "myna" sat quiet and still, and waited for the perplexed wayfarers to settle down again before rousing them with a

fresh false alarm! The "myna" is sacred to the god Rama.

Various species of "bulbuls," especially the Bengal variety (*Pycnonotus pygæus*), are flying about the trees — pretty little birds, with black heads, necks and chests, and a smoky-brown body; often kept as pets on account of their sweet song. There are magpies too, but very unlike our English bird—having the head, neck and chest sooty-brown, with a dark ferruginous back and body and an ashy-grey tail. When the women in Bengal hear them calling, they take it to forebode the arrival of religious mendicants seeking food in charity, and he goes among them by the name of the "pan-scraper." A flash of brilliant yellow among the dark-green foliage indicates where a golden oriole (*Oriolus kundoo*) has flown from one branch to another. This is a very beautiful bird—bright yellow, with black wings and tail,—and its loud mellow whistle is very pleasing to the ear. It builds a most curious nest; sometimes binding the structure in position in the fork of a branch by pieces of cloth or some similar material, which it has pilfered from somewhere for the purpose. There are probably some cuckoos in the trees, but happily at this time of the year they are keeping quiet. One of them, the hawk-cuckoo (*Hiero-*

coccyx varius), of a general grey colour, is known to Europeans as the "brain-fever bird" —as the sleepless Anglo-Indian, driven frantic in the hot nights by his incessant shrill crescendo notes rising higher and higher and yet never seeming to reach the expected top one, has discovered some resemblance between these words and the cry of the bird in the nesting season. Another cuckoo is the "koel" (*Eudynamys orientalis*); glossy greenish-black in appearance, and whose vocal efforts make him almost as great a nuisance as the hawk-cuckoo. Both birds, like our own, lay their eggs in other birds' nests. Somewhere hidden away among the leaves we know is the green barbet (*Thereiceryx zeylonicus*); green, with a brownish head and neck. He too, when spring comes, will excite remarks from suffering Anglo-Indians—he never seems to tire of calling either by day or night, especially if there be moonlight.

Here and there are seen the clever little "baya" finches, or weaver-birds (*Ploceus baya*); dull brown, with bright yellow caps on their heads. Their marvellous long retort-shaped nests hang on many a "babool" tree by the roadside, and perhaps from the fronds of a lofty palm. They are usually constructed of grass, or sometimes of strips of plantain leaf, and natural-

ists may be recommended to read Jerdon's most interesting description of how this is done, for it is unfortunately too long to be given here. You can teach this bird almost anything — to fire off a miniature cannon, to fetch a ring dropped into a well, &c. A pretty trick which it often performs at the command of its master is to take a cardamom seed in its beak, and to fly off and deposit it between the lips of some lady among the spectators. They will breed and build in captivity, and make (unfortunately) most interesting inmates of an aviary. There is a small lump of clay on a cross-bar in the interior of the nest, of which the purpose has puzzled ornithologists. Indians say the bird catches fire-flies and sticks them on the soft clay to light up the structure; but its most probable use is to make the pendent nest more stable, and less liable to be blown about by the wind.

Restless active birds, constantly flying from tree to tree, are the beautiful little green bee-eaters (*Merops viridis*), which love to sit on telegraph wires and swoop from thence on their insect prey —and also the drongo shrikes or king-crows (*Dicrurus ater*); bold lively birds about the size of a starling but far more dapper in appearance, with a black glossy coat and a long forked tail. A king-crow with a friend or two can beat off a

large hawk, and by himself he is quite equal to worsting the shameless plundering Indian crow, three times his size. So far as the author's experience goes, he is about the first bird up in the morning. The god Shiva's lovely bird, the Indian roller (*Coracias indica*), erroneously called the blue jay by Europeans, is sure sooner or later to catch the admiring eye, flapping his wings slowly in his peculiar flight. He is practically blue all over, though the shades pass from cobalt to green, and the neck, scapulars, inter-scapulars, and tertiaries are of a dull ashy-brown with a greenish gloss. His cry belies his appearance, for it is harsh and more like a scream. As a sacred bird, many omens are drawn from his movements. It is a very bad thing, for instance, if he crosses your path just after you start on a journey. A few of his feathers, it is as well to know, if chopped up and given to the animal along with her food, will make a cow yield a larger supply of milk.

Another bird with a curious flight is the grey, or small, hornbill, with his strange horny casque on his head, who flies with an alternation of rapid strokes and a sailing motion with outstretched wings. He is not a very common bird, is of a grey colour, and about twenty-two inches long. He nests in holes in trees, and treats his wife

worse than the Muhammadan of fiction—for he plasters her up in the hole with mud, only allowing her beak to protrude, through which he feeds her. In the "gola," or fig, trees are the beautiful green pigeons or "hariyals" (*Crocopus Phœnicopterus*)—with the top of the head grey and the rest of the plumage green and yellowish green, and lilac on the shoulders of the wings. They seem almost too lovely to shoot—but they are very good eating.

Overhead the hawks and kites are circling with harsh cries, and on an isolated tall tree, a king (or black) vulture (*Otogyps Calvus*) is solemnly sitting. He prefers high cliffs, but there are none near here. Very likely he has his nest and eggs at the top of the tree, for he breeds in the winter. The breeding season is not in India confined to the spring and summer as in England—there is not a month in the whole year when some bird or another is not nesting. And very quaint habits some of them have in this respect; for instance the cotton, or goose, teal (*Nettapus coromandelleanus*), a purely aquatic bird, usually selects a hole in a tree or an old ruin for the purpose, like an owl or a parrot—and the writer has seen a crow's nest constructed entirely of telegraph wire! Where a habit is characteristic of a species the form of its exhibition is very likely different to what it is at home. Thus the "koel" is a cuckoo,

and like most (but not all) cuckoos, lays its eggs in other birds' nests. But he seldom exploits small birds as does our own familiar harbinger of spring. His favourite victim is the cunning and very wideawake crow. When he and his wife set up a domestic establishment, they look out for a female crow on her nest, and, when one is discovered, the male "koel" flies up to her and worries her until she loses her temper and quits the nest to pursue him. She does not catch him, but, during her absence, the female slips in and deposits an egg in the nest—whereupon the two rascals fly off together to a neighbouring tree and presumably congratulate one another on the success of the stratagem! The crow has few friends—some tribes in the south, according to Mr Edgar Thurston, believe that hell is the abode of an *iron* crow which feeds on all that go there! There is something startlingly original in this conception.

On either side of the road beyond the trees, so far as the eye can see, grow the various crops, in irregular fields with no hedges but only low banks of earth, separating them one from another; and very verdant and pleasing they look in the dawn of an up-country winter's morning. There are wheat, the yellow mustard, barley, oats, peas, flax or linseed (*Linum usitatissimum*) with its

little blue flowers, chick pea "chana," or "gram" (*Cicer arietinum*) much beloved of quail, the prickly safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius*), &c. But what soonest catch the eye in the landscape are the fields of the tall, thickly growing sugar-cane (*Saccharum officinarum*); the maize, or Indian corn, with its broad green leaves; "juar" (*Andropogon sorghum*), dark green in colour and the grain carried in a single large head growing at the top of the stem; and "bajra" (*Pennisetum typhoideum*), with its stem ending in a sort of spike like the head of a bulrush, with the grains packed closely together upon it. All these grow to the height of six or eight feet or more. They are ripening now and are infested with all sorts of birds; especially the bright green noisy parakeets (there are no true parrots in India), and of course the ubiquitous sparrow whom the old Egyptians so wisely chose as an emblem of evil. Upon raised bamboo platforms here and there in the fields are posted boys, who, with loud cries and stones hurled with great accuracy from slings, wage incessant war against the feathered marauders. We see no turnips, beets, or similar crops, for the Indian does not grow roots but bare fallows his land, and upon the ground so treated and upon the open plains covered with coarse herbage and

sometimes with an efflorescence of deleterious salts known as "reh," are grazing the village cattle, sheep and goats—usually in charge of diminutive urchins armed with heavy bamboo poles longer than themselves. Dotted about the landscape are dark-green groves of mangoes and isolated trees of various descriptions, and the grazing animals, nibbling at the lower branches of these, have trimmed them so as to present an aspect of uniformity which much increases the beauty of the landscape. To plant a grove of trees, or to dig a well, are wisely held to constitute acts of merit; for both are usually available for wayfarers, and in a hot, dry, thirsty land are blessings indeed. A well-advised Indian philanthropist once left money for the construction of a thousand wells on the great highway between Calcutta and Peshawur, some 1500 miles long. In the part of the country we are traversing, wells are not, as a rule, very deep or expensive to construct. The loamy soil may rest on sand, and between this water-bearing stratum and the soil above, is very likely a reef or platform of stiff clay. The well-ring is sunk to rest on this platform, and when a hole is pierced in the latter the water rushes up to fill the well without injuring the masonry cylinder. Sometimes the retaining material is not even of masonry, but of ropes of twigs inter-

laced and plaited together, and coiled round the interior of the well to prevent the earth from falling in at the sides.

As we wend our way we meet or overtake many parties of agricultural labourers with their nondescript dogs running beside them—the men with their heads muffled up in blankets (the early morning air is held to be unhealthy) and pulling at their long country pipes; while the women are swinging gracefully along (for no one carries herself better than does the Indian woman, accustomed as she is to bearing water pitchers on her head), with their blue shawls over their faces, their bright skirts swaying, and their anklets pleasantly clinking as they move. Hindus are very fond of blue (like the Akhali faquir), though Muhammadans detest the colour. All are talking incessantly—mostly, apparently, about the crops, the price of grain, and the doings of their neighbours. Here is a man leading a yoke of oxen with the yoke and a rope across their shoulders, while their master carries a light plough, or a heavy leathern bag for raising water, on his head. The former implement seems ridiculously light and primitive, but it has to be dragged by small, often indifferently fed, cattle; and moreover, the agriculturist does not like to stir the deeper, and often sourer, soil. He certainly somehow gets a

wonderful tilth and seed-bed—rolling (if the term be admitted) the ground by standing on a heavy plank drawn by his deliberate oxen over the clods. There is nothing very wrong about a system of agriculture by which less than an acre of land can be made to feed, and partially clothe, an individual; and this is what the ryot accomplishes, partly by his skill, and also by his unremitting, if not particularly strenuous, labour. Very soon, when the sun is fully up, all the face of the country will be sprinkled with spots of bright colour from the garments of the women, and the shining brown bodies of the men. The villages will be nearly deserted save by a few old crones, foraging vagrant dogs, and (especially where low-caste people predominate) the unspeakable pigs. Men, women, and children will all be doing some form or another of work in the fields; and, as a rule, they see the sun rise and set at their labour. In normal years, with five acres of good irrigated land, a man and his family can do themselves very comfortably. And even as concerns the landless class of cultivators, it is not only regarded as a religious duty, but is also to the best interests of the landowners, to see them through bad times. Charity in India is widespread, and where poor-houses exist at all, they are usually only tenanted by lepers, waifs, and strays. It is only on occa-

sions of stress, as in a famine, that State aid is called for.

A country highway in India like the one we are endeavouring to describe, always presents a curious and very interesting scene, for we are constantly meeting quaint strange folk whose occupations it is not very easy at first to determine. A man in a dingy greenish coat, and a wisp of dirty cloth of the same colour bound round his head, comes slouching along with a bamboo pole on his shoulders, to either end of which is suspended a wicker-work bird-cage containing two or three "mynas," a fierce-looking barbet, half a dozen sparrows, a couple of doves, and a dejected-looking yellowish white owl. Borne on one arm like a shield, is a sort of little mantlet made of green leaves fixed on a bamboo framework, and under the other he has a bundle of small canes like the joints of a fishing-rod. He is a bird-catcher, and at our request shows us a specimen of his skill. A misguided "myna" is making remarks on the top of a tall tree at short distance off, and is pointed out as a quarry. The "chirimar" glides to the foot of the tree under the shelter of his leafy screen, and slips a forked twig smeared with bird-lime into the smallest joint of his rod. This he inserts into a larger one, and cautiously pushes the limed twig up through the foliage. The

process is repeated until the rod is long enough to reach the unsuspecting bird perched up above, and so softly and dexterously is the operation performed that the first thing that "myna" knows is when the twig touches him and he is captured! As a reward, we purchase the sportsman's entire bag, and put it to the use for which it was intended. None of the birds are fit for food, but would have been purchased in the nearest town for small sums to be released as an act of merit. The captives therefore are set at liberty, but there is some difficulty about the poor old owl. No one likes to touch or look at him, since this would be pretty sure to bring about some misfortune; and, moreover, if let out in the open, he would probably be done to death by other birds—especially by the sporting black fork-tailed king-crows. So he is put up amid the dark foliage of a tree by the monkey-like bird-catcher, and we proceed on our way.

As we reach a bend in the road, an altercation just in front of us excites our attention. The driver of a country cart full of cut herbage has gone to sleep, muffled up in his blanket, while squatting on the long pole which passes from the cart to the yoke on the bullocks' necks—and the animals, wisely preferring the better track, have meandered over the little central elevation in the

road and have collided with a double-canopied carriage with curtains round it (known as a "rukh") which is conveying the wife of a farmer in state with her family and a female servant to a neighbouring village, to purchase various small articles at the weekly fair held there. The driver of this conveyance has also probably become more or less comatose from cold and sleepiness, and as a result has been precipitated from his seat to the ground among the legs of his trotting bullocks—great, white, handsome animals with strings of large blue beads round their necks. On the occurrence of the collision, a chorus of shrieks comes from within the curtains, and then two heads belonging to the meek, down-trodden women of India emerge—and what that rustic Jehu who brought about the accident is submitted to, should suffice to destroy his self-respect for ever! His origin, character, and probable destiny, are explained to him with the shrillest volubility—but at the sight of the "sahib," veils are hurriedly pulled over the faces of the ladies, the curtains are rapidly drawn together again, and a blessed peace suddenly supervenes. The driver of the "rukh" scrambles out of the dust from amid the oxen's legs and resumes his seat without remark—while the author of the disaster takes not the faintest interest in the whole affair, but resumes his

journey (returning, however, to the right side of the road) as if nothing whatever had happened. The Indian rustic is not a clever man, but has certain traits which must be accounted unto him for wisdom, and his attitude when attacked by his women-folk has always excited the writer's sincere admiration. He rarely retorts, and the spectacle of a villager under such circumstances, placidly smoking his long country pipe apparently wrapt in complete mental abstraction, must be seen to be properly appreciated. It is very difficult to grasp that he is in any way involved (much less interested) in the proceedings. As a rule the lady presently gives him up in despair, and wanders away still shrilly voicing her grievances to the empty air!

It is not long, of course, before we come across the ubiquitous "sadhu" or faquir, briskly moving along with his mat and antelope skin on his back, nude save for a waist-cloth, covered with ashes, a great bundle of ropes of hair (not always his own) tied up in a knot on the top of his head or hanging in long strands over his shoulders, and with a begging bowl of coco-de-mer in one hand and a long pair of iron pincers and a thorny stick in the other. He does not "salaam" like the other wayfarers, (faquirs never do), and indeed proposes to pass by without acknowledging our

presence. But asked when he left holy Badrinarain, he stops in some surprise and smiles. We point to the thorny stick, which nearly all pilgrims to this distant shrine among the Himalayan snows purchase there, and this action loosens his tongue. One month ago, he says, he left there, and is now on his way to Pryag (Allahabad)—where the three rivers, the Ganges, Jumna, and the invisible Sarasvati (the lost river of Sind) meet—to attend the great "méla" (bathing fair) at that spot. The pilgrimage to the Himalayan shrines, he goes on to say, was a good one, and the Great Gods sent no sickness at the big méla at Hardwar; but this, he adds, the "sahib" knows, for he saw him there. Mahunt (head of a religous sect) Tej Gir, the Nirmula, he has heard is sick, and has gone back to his farm in the Punjab. Some of the members of these wandering ascetic sects only spend about six months on their pilgrimages and cultivate their land for the rest of the year, and the information is probably correct. He moves away with no further remark or greeting—unostentatiously making a sign with his fingers which we rather uncomfortably recognise to be intended to ward off any evil effects from contact with our presence. Holy men in India have great influence. One of the most famous the writer has ever met, who lived, almost nude and covered

with ashes, under a tree in a garden, and was reputed to have attained to the highest degree of sanctity and to have completely abstracted himself from all worldly things, rather inconsistently kept a visitors' book in which he requested all travellers of distinction who out of curiosity came to see him, to write their names. Once, when the present writer was talking to him in his retreat, another person arrived, and, after meekly salaaming to the "swami," joined in the conversation. He was unattended, and dressed in the plainest fashion; but after we had quitted the holy presence together he mentioned his name. It was that of one of the greatest princes in Southern India! The recluse had written the history of his life in a small pamphlet of some interest, but which appeared to have been considerably "edited." "Cacoethes scribendi" is a disease peculiar to no age or clime. An old friend of the writer, a rajah of defective education and limited intelligence, embarked at the age of sixty-five on a modest work entitled 'The Religions of the World'—which, however, never saw the light!

A tall, dignified-looking man about fifty years of age, with a spotless white "puggri" on his head, a long black coat over his body, and the sacred thread which denotes the "twice born" hanging over his left shoulder and under his right

arm, now comes ambling along on his weedy-looking but tough little pony, and, on catching sight of our party, dismounts and "salaams." Is his honour's health good? That is a good thing. His servant's health, by his honour's favour, is also good. He owns the village near the road and a good deal of the land about it. The crops, the gods be praised, are satisfactory, but caterpillars are doing much harm to the young "gram," and the borers are injuring the "juar" and sugar-cane. White ants did a good deal of mischief to the pieces of the latter put in the ground for seed. The wild pigs, too, are troublesome—will his honour's dogs face them? Yes; he told the "zillah sahib" (magistrate) about this, but he only came to the district a month ago, and it is heard that he is leaving in the spring—so what profit is there in telling him? The "sahibs" have killed some with spears, but it takes a long time to kill them thus, and he thinks it is a better plan to hire low-caste people to catch them in nets and club them to death. But he knows the "sahibs" prefer to ride after them with spears—that is their way. There are some antelope he saw go into a sugar-cane field about a mile back, and perhaps the "sahib" will shoot some, as they are doing much mischief. Only males!—well, that he has heard too is the "sahib's" way.

Did the cherisher of the poor know Muckintose Sahib who was the "zillah sahib" some years ago? A "pucka (real) sahib," and very "hoshyar" (clever), very fond of "shikar" (sport), and with a most kind "mizaj" (nature). Many a time has he given this poor one a "mulaqat" (interview), for he liked to see and talk with the people. He has gone to Europe, but Nuttoo, his "bearer," who lives on the pension his old master sends him, says he is well, but sorrowing to have left India. Well, it is the will of the gods. Has his servant permission to continue his journey and do his "kam" (work)? Salaam!

A most courteous, pleasant gentleman. May the "kam" he is proceeding upon have nothing to do with the money-lender!

Some men and women of a gipsy tribe of jugglers called "Nats" now pass us — the men bowing nearly to the ground in a cringing servile manner, while the good-looking girls look at us and laugh in a way very uncommon in the East. They want us to stop and see some of their acrobatic feats; and this we should like to do, for they are extremely clever in some of their performances, but we have a long journey still before us—so, throwing them a few coppers in response to their cries for "bucksheesh," we bid them move on. Troublesome folk — the men

nearly all thieves, and the women nearly all immoral. These half-wild wandering tribes of ancient lineage are often a great pest, and it is difficult to know what to do with them. Their forefathers for ages have always been the same as themselves, and the people have got used to them. Sometimes, however, when they stop long in a locality, their depredations get too bad for the villagers, and they petition the magistrate who orders the gang to be moved on by the police to a distance from the scene of their operations. The writer has often met these personally-conducted parties. The brazen-faced women and their children crowd round with whining appeals for charity which are contradicted by their impudent grinning faces and their well-nourished bodies. There are no men with them. These gentry have no fancy for coming into contact with the police, but are close by—skulking in the crops near the line of march during the day, and slipping into the temporary encampment with any edible products of petty larceny at night, until such time as the escort quits the party and they are left again to their own devices.

Two strange individuals sauntering along—one with a small covered wicker basket slung at either end of a long bamboo pole carried on his shoulders—can be readily recognised by the colour and design of the "puggris" and gar-

ments they wear, to be snake-charmers. These garments are of an unusual tinge of brick-red colour, with curious devices in black lines upon them. The coarse cloth of which they are made can only be obtained at a few places (Amritsur, if the writer's memory serves, is one of them). The snakes are coiled up in the baskets—poisonous ones usually, but their fangs have been drawn. These fangs, however, grow again, and occasionally the owners of the snakes lose their lives by carelessly allowing them to get too long. One individual handles the snakes on the ground at a performance; swiftly and dexterously snatching one out of his basket and then irritating it by rapidly moving his closed fist in front of the enraged reptile standing erect in a coil or two of its body, and with its hood (if a cobra) spread out and displaying the spectacles at the back. The charmer always presents the rounded back of his fist to the snake, so that if his hand be struck, the recurved fangs will probably slip over the tense skin without inflicting a wound or scratch. All the while, the other man, squatting close by, is producing a droning sound by blowing through a quaint sort of reed-pipe with a bowl at the end of it. For a consideration they will show you how a mungoose kills a snake, and, although the proceed-

ing is rather cruel, it is perhaps worth seeing once—as it is to observe how a snake can catch and eat a large frog. When the mungoose and the snake see each other, both are roused to fury. The cobra erects his hood, his tongue darts backwards and forwards from his mouth, and he emits that sound which sends a cold shiver down your back when you hear it in a dark room! The mungoose becomes a perfect little fiend. His eyes grow red—every hair on his body is on end—and in a second the conflict commences. It is almost impossible to follow the movements of either with the eye. The snake is pretty quick, but the mungoose is the very incarnation of enraged activity. The result is nearly always the same, and in a few moments the extraordinarily nimble little creature has sprung from behind upon the reptile, and is gnawing at the back of its head! He is very seldom struck, but when he is (the Indians say), he immediately rushes off to the jungle to find a root he knows of which is an antidote to the poison. Most Indians believe in the existence of a stone which has the power of drawing the virus from a snake-bite. It drops off the wound as soon as it has absorbed the poison, but if you heat it in the fire to destroy this, it can be used again. Stones (possibly gall-stones) found

in the stomachs of certain wild goats and antelopes, are also used as antidotes, but these are usually employed as charms or as medicines.

It is a most uncommon thing for a European to be bitten by a snake in India, yet most old residents have had some rather close shaves. Once, the writer remembers, he was at a dinner-party during the rainy season, in a bungalow where the dining-room opened on a verandah from which a few broad stone steps led down into the garden. A few yards away from these steps was a raised circular brick platform called a "chabootra," upon which it is very pleasant to sit in the evenings in the comparative coolness of the open air. On the occasion referred to, all the party rose after dinner and proceeded down these stone steps to this platform—the long dresses of the ladies of course brushing them as they descended. The writer remained a few minutes behind with his host (he had some excellent Madeira!) and then both followed the ladies, and accompanied by the "bearer" carrying a lamp. Suddenly the latter shouted out "samp, samp" (snake, snake), and a very large cobra which had been lying in the receding angle between two steps, wriggled rapidly away. He must have been lying there while the whole party had walked over him! No doubt he had kept quiet

until he thought all danger was past, and had then attempted to glide off. To finish the story, he ran into a hole in the masonry plinth of the house, but the "bearer" caught him by the tail when he was half in, and held him, of course quite safely, until the other servants came up and killed him with clubs! It was a very fortunate escape, especially for the ladies, for their unprotected slippered feet were within a few inches of the deadly creature. We must, however, if one comes to think of it, be often very near death without knowing it. Some little trifle averts an awful accident—a disease germ, swallowed or breathed, perishes instead of developing and multiplying and causing fatal sickness—and so on. And, conversely, how swiftly and unexpectedly death, "dark mother always gliding near with soft feet," may strike us! Once, upon a march along an unfrequented track in the Himalayas over which probably not half a dozen men passed in the twenty-four hours, we came upon a man crushed to death under one of the few large trees which bordered the path. It was an old pine, and must have fallen just as the isolated traveller was exactly opposite it. A minute earlier or later and he would have escaped. The Muhammadan orderly who was standing by gazing with the writer at the poor victim, put the matter tersely from his

point of view. "Sahib," said he, "his 'kismet' must have been very bad."

Indians will not kill snakes, especially cobras, if they can help it, as they are sacred; and if they should have to do so in self-defence, make prayers and offer apologies to their spirits — otherwise there is a serious risk of contracting leprosy.

A droning noise calls our attention to a sort of long box swinging on a stout bamboo pole and with sliding doors on two sides, which is being borne along by four lusty natives. It is a "dhooly," or palanquin, and the men are "kahars"; a caste which formerly did nothing but this sort of work, but which is now, in these times of railways and good roads, compelled to follow other occupations. They make very good body-servants, and you can recognise them by the callosities on their shoulders caused by their occupation. The man inside the conveyance is probably a banker or lawyer or something of the kind and he has been evidently travelling all night, for by the side of the "dhooly" runs (they are going at least five miles an hour) a quaint personage known as a "masalchi." He bears in one hand a large extinguished torch made of rags bound round a stout stick, and in the other he holds a bottle made of hairless skin with a long tube projecting from it, which contains the oil

with which to anoint his torch at intervals. He is rather an important part of the show, for he not only lights the way, but also keeps up a sort of crooning song to lighten the tedium of the labour of his friends. When the traveller is a "sahib," this extemporary chant is at first descriptive of the merits of their burden and especially of his world-famed reputation for extreme liberality,—of which his present bearers will no doubt presently find a gratifying instance. But when the irresponsive traveller appears to have dropped into slumber, the song assumes a jocose and distinctly Rabelaisian character, which apparently greatly delights and amuses the perspiring bearers of the conveyance! Nowadays travelling by this method is not often necessary, but is in some parts of the country, on account of the state of the roads and tracks, still adopted, and is by no means uncomfortable. With a double set of bearers they will take you forty or fifty miles at a stretch.

It is an unfailing source of interest and amusement, this collection of unusual people moving along an Indian rural highway, but presently our route leaves the main road and we proceed down one leading to some small villages, and which is little more than a narrow deep-rutted track. It is not long before one of the dogs spies a grey object

stealing across the open plain,—a terrific barking and struggling at the chains ensues, and the dog-boy calls out "Jackal, sahib, jackal." We hurriedly mount and the pack is soon streaming after the animal, which has now abandoned all hopes of getting away unseen, and is doing his best to reach the nearest sugar-cane field, where the high dense crop will afford him shelter. It is a glorious burst, but the "jack" is a fleet one and gets into cover just in time to save his life, and all our efforts to get him out again are futile. A large well-grown sugar-cane field is a sanctuary for many animals. If you get a long rope, and let two or more men drag it over the top of the crop from one end of the field to the other, you will be surprised to see what comes out of it. The stalks are too stiff and densely planted to allow a moving rope to drop down among them, and it sweeps over them with a loud swishing noise which frightens out almost everything lurking below. Wild pigs, antelope, jackals, hares, and possibly a wolf with his heavy ruff round his neck, break out at the end and sides; a great number of birds flutter out into the air; and probably a few peafowl will rise with a tremendous noise and sail away to some safer locality—the long tail coverts of the males spreading in the breeze and very much embarrassing the alarmed owners. The

young peafowl are all of the sombre colour of the mother, and so the more readily escape notice and danger. In the case of most birds the female is the more plainly dressed, and the young take after her; but what a marvellous dispensation of Providence it is that when the mother is the gaily coloured one, the offspring should take after the father!

Close to the sugar-cane field is a small lake or "jheel" (the crop requires a great deal of water—so much so that snipe are sometimes found in it, a fact not known to all sportsmen), and in the middle of this "jheel" a good many wild-fowl are resting and feeding. But they are too far out to be within reach of the gun from the shore, and we only pick up a few stragglers, less cautious than their fellows, in the weeds and reeds on the edge. A bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), with its handsome plumage of ochre-yellow tinged with reddish-brown and zigzag lines of blackish-brown at the sides, also rises in an ungainly fashion out of these, but is spared. This bird and the heron were, we know, the favourite quarries of hawking parties in the old days in England. One seldom sees them flying very high in India, and the wild kites and hawks seem to interfere very little with them. In the West, they are described as soaring higher and higher in the air above their foes so as to

prevent the latter from striking them from above; but certainly in India the bittern would make but a poor show in an aerial encounter with the larger hawks, though he has a very formidable weapon in his great yellowish-green beak. All Indians with whom the writer has talked on the subject, ridicule the idea of a bittern or a heron spitting a hawk on his beak when the latter makes his swoop.

By the side of the "jheel" we meet a Government vaccinator who is waiting for us—for there is a large village close by which we propose to inspect, and, among other matters, test this official's work. As we approach the settlement, there is a stampede into it of several loafing unclad urchins, and a great barking of half-wild village dogs. Our own dogs are on the leash, for, curiously enough, English hounds never fraternise with those of the country, but regard them with great disdain and contempt, and "go for" them on the slightest provocation. Even if a "pi" dog (country or pariah dog) be adopted by a "sahib," he maintains a respectful demeanour to the foreigners, though he puts on tremendous side with his erstwhile comrades! There is a good deal "to" a dog! Who has not had one as a friend? Curiously enough, in his wild state he is one of the most untamable of animals. Village

"pis" in India are a terrible nuisance in camp—slinking round the tents quite unseen, and carrying off your dinner in the darkness almost out of the hands of your servants conveying it to your tent. Living as they do from hand (or paw!) to mouth—for they have to forage for themselves—they get wonderfully sharp. On one occasion the writer, out with his horse and dogs, fired a shot at the buck in a herd of ravine deer some distance off, and apparently missed. But presently we saw them in the distance pursued by a mob of village mongrels. The "shikari" instantly said the buck was hit or the dogs would never have taken up the chase, and he was perfectly right—for when our own pack had been slipped and the writer had mounted and followed, he presently came on the buck where a fierce fight was raging between his own and the village animals for the prize. The deer had been hit too far back and the bullet had passed through the stomach, which had not, however, prevented its going almost as well as ever. But the village dogs—a long distance off—had at once grasped the situation and pursued.

The "chowkidar," or watchman, comes out to meet us, clad in his blue jean coat and red puggri, a long bamboo pole on his shoulder, and his birth and death registers in a leathern case hanging

from his side. He "salaams" deeply, drawing back one leg and pressing both his hands to his forehead. The vaccinated children, he says, are gathered at the headman's house—so, under his guidance, we proceed in that direction past the little village shrine with its contained god plentifully bespattered with vermilion to conciliate him, and, threading the narrow winding unpaved streets and alleys, pass through the village—our guide preceding us and bundling wayfarers, sacred cows, wandering buffaloes, old folk, and howling dogs, out of our path. On either side of the road are low one-storied huts built of mud, roofed with thatch or beaten-down clay, and the walls decorated with patches of cow-dung drying in the sun for fuel. Here and there is one of a more pretentious character, double-storied, and covered with roughly-made country tiles; and such roofs are covered with thorny bushes, for it is a Hindu village and swarms with monkeys. These are mischievous animals and would soon remove portions of such a roof, especially if an enemy threw a handful of grain on it at night—for in such a case, should a prowling troop once find a kernel of the grain under a loose tile, they would speedily tear off most of the remainder in their further search for any concealed food. A monkey in a Hindu community does pretty much what

Villagers in their homes.

he likes. He sallies forth with his companions into the fields, and takes as much as he desires of the crop without let or hindrance. He almost lives with the people in their houses. The creatures, of course, are under the protection of Hanuman, the monkey-god; but, apart from this, the villagers have a good deal of sympathy with the "little people," despite the annoyances they cause. The maternal instinct in them is very strong, and a female monkey will fight a big dog in defence of her young one, and will speedily get assistance from all others in the vicinity. If she loses her bantling in any way by death, she will often carry the body about with her for weeks—fighting valiantly if need be for the gruesome little bundle of skin and bone. When plague broke out at Hardwar, the numerous monkeys there contracted the disease and were therefore clearly a probable source of danger by propagating the infection to men; so they were tempted by food into great cages of bamboo, which were then taken out into remote jungles and the creatures released where they could do no harm. The people, incredulous as to the destination of the animals, and regarding these cages as lethal chambers, called them, quite simply, "monkey *hospitals*"—which appeared to indicate a mistaken impression as to the functions of such institutions.

It is to be feared, indeed, that most rustics looked upon admission into a plague hospital as equivalent to a sentence of death—and of course the mortality in such institutions was terribly high.

As we move along, almost smothered by the clouds of dust raised by the frantic efforts of the "sweepers," or conservancy servants (suddenly realising with horror that this is a sanitary inspection), a crowd gathers about us, and numerous bright eyes peep round half-closed doors or from the top of the flat roofs as we pass. The headman's house is in the centre of the village, and has a raised platform of earth in front of it—while in the open space before this is growing a magnificent "peepul," or sacred fig-tree (*Ficus religiosa*), beneath which the village elders sit, talk, and hold councils. As we approach the dwelling the owner hurriedly emerges, painfully struggling to get his arms into the long purple, gold-embroidered silk coat in which he is wont to robe himself when making visits of ceremony or receiving visitors of distinction. His "puggri" is over one eye, and he is clawing the ground with his feet, endeavouring to find the elaborately-worked slippers with red patches over the toes, which a ragged and excited retainer has run out from the house with and put down before him. We stare into the "peepul" to give him leisure to adjust his ward-

robe and "salaam" with the requisite dignity. Some one will catch it presently for not having waked him up in time!

Two rickety chairs of European make (probably heirlooms), of which the cane seats have long since disappeared and have been replaced by wooden boards, are now produced, and the "sahib" is requested to be seated. A friendly and polite altercation ensues, for the headman is a member of the District Board and so entitled to a chair on occasions of State (the principal reason for his entering public life), and is with difficulty at length persuaded to take the other seat of honour. A conversation of a somewhat perfunctory character follows—while the villagers stand round gazing with interest and pleasure at the compliment paid to their representative. This individual, now a little more comfortable, somewhat mendaciously improves the occasion. The crops, it seems, although sufficiently satisfactory in appearance to the casual eye, are in reality afflicted by many insidious and devastating diseases, and are in a parlous condition. The people (including the headman) are all extremely poor, and God alone knows how the revenue can be paid—which makes it all the more fortunate that a wise and good "sahib" should have happened to come and visit them in their trouble and to see and hear things

for himself. There is no sickness in the village—no; the two people the "sahib" speaks of did not die of plague, but of fever, and the watchman is a very foolish man and made a false report. The place, as the "sahib" will see, is very clean—unless it is on the outskirts where the low-caste "chumars" live and skin animals, and where others keep pigs. All the people fully understand the benefit of vaccination—this poor one has had his own sons vaccinated, and would have been so himself only he had suffered from smallpox several times when a boy, and so it was not necessary. Yes; the "sahib" shall see all the vaccinated children at once. Mahabir Pershad, the vaccinator, is a good man and very skilful, and all the people like him.

A long line of women with their blue shawls drawn over their faces, concealing their squalling infants beneath the folds, now appears, and the vaccinator produces his registers and commences to call them up. A woman approaches. "Child's name?" "Nunnee." "Father's name?" Awkward pause. This, it seems, is an indelicate question, and she turns to a neighbour to reply; for a female should not mention her husband's name to a stranger, not only because it is "bad form" to give it, but also because doing so might bring him to an untimely end. The information

is supplied and the child's arm is inspected—quite satisfactory. Then the spouses of Luchmun, oil-presser, Seetul, waterman, Bûddhoo, sweeper, and some twenty others, submit their offspring to be examined—all showing good results. A slight hitch occurs when the wife of Kishen Lal, shop-keeper, fails to appear; and, moreover, it seems that her two children have gone to their mother-in-law in another village some distance off. But this is all right, for she is a person of some position, and the entire village is prepared to endorse the statement that the children are fully protected. Chumpa, "chumar," and Chintoo, barber, have both lost their daughters since the vaccinator last visited the village; and an inspection of the watchman's little red canvas-covered register of births and deaths shows that these incidents have been properly recorded—one having died of "pains in stomach," and the other having "refused mother's milk." On the whole, the work seems to have been well done; though the operation in the case of the infants of all the Brahmans and those of the headman himself, appear to have been unfortunately unsuccessful. No comment upon this, however, is made—doubtless the vaccinator is richer by a rupee or two for having used water instead of lymph in these cases—but then vaccination is a new and suspected proceeding in the

locality and the thing is to get a start, and had he failed to meet the wishes of the influential people he would probably have been hustled out of the village and have got nothing done at all. When smallpox next visits the place, the lesson, very sadly, will be learnt, and presently all will come to accept the proffered protection. A goddess is concerned in the appearance of the disease, and compulsory action would be greatly resented, and certainly do much more harm than good.

The wailing infants and their relieved mothers having been dismissed with a few words of approbation, and a suitable tribute having been paid to the headman for his enlightened and practical assistance, a brass pot of warm milk is brought, into which the bearer of the offering drops a few pieces of sugar with an extremely dirty hand. This hospitality, which must be accepted to avoid giving offence, is always a source of dread, for villagers seldom use milk fresh, but boil it over small fires made of cow-dung cakes which give it a pungent flavour. However, luckily the consumption of a very small quantity will suffice to please your host and indicate friendliness.

All now rise, and a sanitary inspection of the village is made in company with the headman and the whole of the male inhabitants. It is pointed out that the village pond is, for sufficiently

obvious reasons, unsuitable as a source of drinking supply, and that the village well is not the best place into which to lead the surface drainage—both comments being received as novel, but possibly correct. A suggestion to store garbage, &c., away from the dwellings is met, however, with the unanswerable objection that in that case it would be stolen, and that then there would be nothing left to manure the owner's little plot of land. Pigs, it is conceded, are better out of the inhabited area, but some doubt is evidently felt as to the superiority of clay over cow-dung for plastering the interior of houses. Attention is called to the desirability of more quickly reporting cases of epidemic disease (at this point the watchman, who appears to be desirous of saying something, is hustled into the background), and various other pieces of advice are given—all of which are most courteously and gratefully accepted, and probably all immediately forgotten or ignored as being no doubt of value in the mysterious land from which "sahibs" come, but totally unsuited to conditions in India. Still the great "Sirkar" (Government) has evidently not forgotten the village and its inhabitants—they have voiced their wants and aired their grievances, and it is wonderful how the opportunity of doing so is appreciated.

Finally, the sick and afflicted are seen, and,

where any relief or comfort are likely to result from the procedure, arrangements are made with the headman for their despatch in bullock carts to the nearest hospital for treatment. We are then escorted to the edge of the settlement, and, after pleasant parting greetings, proceed on our way. We have accomplished very little of immediate practical utility, but we believe that we have conveyed to the people the impression that we wish them well. Presently, should cholera, plague, or smallpox, strike the little settlement, the residents in their extremity may possibly remember what the "sahib" told them—and it may be even that some of his suggestions will be adopted, and the lessons so learnt come to bear good fruit in time.

Two or three more similar visits to other villages—another run with the dogs and a long, unsuccessful shot at a black buck—and then the increasing power of the sun and a sinking under the waist-belt, suggest that it is time for a gallop to the camp. It is only some three miles off, and presently the welcome sight of the white tents among the dark foliage of a grove of trees meets our eyes. Then a plunge into the cool tub while the cook prepares breakfast—and how good both are! There is a good deal of charm and fascination about this wandering life, for, after all, a

healthy man is very much a vagabond at heart, and perhaps there is something in what Samuel Butler says, that "certainly there is great virtue in highways and hedges to make an able man, and a good prospect cannot but let him see far into things."

DUNPUT.

When Manders Sahib, I.C.S., retired, he took home with him to England a considerable collection of Indian curiosities and works of art, which he loves to display before his somewhat faintly interested friends. Among the articles thus accumulated is a grotesquely designed silver bangle, which is one of his most effective exhibits, and regarding the history of which he is accustomed to dilate at some length. It appears that some years ago, when in camp in a rather lonely spot, he was in the habit of whiling away his leisure time by shooting at the crocodiles which infested the river running close to his tents, and that on one occasion he had mortally wounded one of these saurians by a shot which his listeners are led to surmise was of exceptional accuracy and merit. As is usually the case, the stricken creature had sunk after receiving its death wound, but in a few days' time had risen to the surface, and, the body being found stranded on a sandbank a mile or so

down the river, Manders Sahib had had it opened —when the bangle referred to had been found in the stomach. On the occasion of this incident, as on many others, the sportsman had been much assisted by his orderly, a hill-man of the name of Bhowan Singh—"perhaps," as he remarks, "one of the most excellent and well-conducted subordinates I have ever had under me." He usually terminates the narrative with these words, "Doubtless the ornament was the possession of some poor native woman seized by the brute when she was bathing." But Manders Sahib never knew the real history of that bangle—which it is the purpose of the present story to relate.

In a country where almost every adult is, or has been, married; where the future couples are betrothed as mere children and become man and wife as soon as they are of a marriageable age; where lapses from conjugal fidelity are always attended with social ostracism and frequently with even worse consequences,—the element of romance in such matters is necessarily considerably restricted, and the pleasing arts of coquetry and flirtation seriously curtailed. Nevertheless, human nature being what it is, the daughters of Eve, even under such disadvantageous circumstances, appear to have inherited some of the characteristics of their remote ancestress—skittish mothers (as doubtless

the excellent Abbot of Brünn would have foreseen) have often skittish descendants—and so it will occasionally happen in India as elsewhere that the young folk will kick over the traces with very uncomfortable consequences to all concerned.

Dunput, son of Bhola, was a middle-aged agriculturist living in the little village of Banpur in Upper India. He was fairly well-to-do for one of his class, owned a very fair hut and a little land, and, having lost his first wife, had found little difficulty in persuading his neighbours and caste fellows, the parents of Luchminia, to bestow her hand upon him in a second marriage—the negotiations being somewhat facilitated by the fact that they were in his debt. It cannot be justly stated, however, that the alliance particularly commended itself to the girl, for Dunput was no longer young, possessed few personal charms, and was moreover regarded as somewhat stupid in a community in which the intellectual standard was not lofty. Still, he was apparently of a mild and inoffensive nature, and led a respectable if unambitious existence in a contented bovine manner which earned him the approval of his fellow villagers, equally incredulous as to the advantages of the strenuous life. Luchminia herself was just seventeen—bright and pretty, and not unaware of the fact. But she had been well brought up—knew that

the parents could not afford a dowry—and recognised exactly what was expected of her. The marriage therefore duly took place—the couple solemnly took the seven steps round the sacred fire with their garments knotted together—her husband somewhat grudgingly released her father from the small debt he owed him—and Luchminia drifted into the great mass of women in India married under precisely similar circumstances, who manage as a rule somehow to become fairly happy wives, and incidentally to run their spouses and the domestic ménage generally.

All might have gone well therefore in the present case but for the unfortunate accident that Manders Sahib, I.C.S., having been appointed to make a settlement—*i.e.*, to determine revenue assessments, &c., of that portion of the country in which the village of Banpur was situated—had settled down in camp for some months in the neighbourhood; and among the numerous satellites which clustered round this central star was a good-looking young hill Rajpoot orderly—one Bhowan Singh by name. He was just as well acquainted with the advantages of his personal appearance as was Luchminia, but was, withal, a well-mannered intelligent man and a great favourite with his master. Hill-folk, even among the better classes, have not as a rule such strict notions regarding the seclusion of

women as have their brethren in the plains. Bhowan Singh was a bit of a Lothario—and it was not long before he discovered, not only that Luchminia was well favoured, but was also not averse to admiration. He did not fail to note that the lithe graceful figure braced itself up, while the voluminous pleated blue skirt swayed with more regularity and the anklets tinkled with more melody, at his approach. Her head was always decorously covered with her blue "sari," or shawl, with its embroidered margin, but it was easy to look round the edge of this, and her bright eyes not infrequently sparkled on the smart young orderly — very much to the satisfaction of the object of her glances.

The camp was situated about a mile from Banpur, and in the middle of the latter little centre of population was a small shanty in which a melancholy-looking "baboo," or clerk, sat at a cheap ill-made table plentifully besmirched with ink and gum stains, and littered with curious missives in brown paper envelopes, evidently the construction of the authors. of the contained effusions. A common oil lamp with a dirty improvised paper shade stood on this table, and served at night to shed a faint light on the operations of the official—while a tattered Postal Guide of remote date, between the pages of which

the stamps for sale were inserted for safe custody, yielded the entirely misleading information as to dates of despatch of mails, rates of postage, &c., supplied to any inquirers on such matters. A rough wooden stool for the comfort of the presiding genius, and a clumsy wooden country box with a cheap lock for the retention of the archives of the institution, completed the furniture of the apartment; and outside the door, suspended from a nail, was a red painted sort of tin drum with a slit in it, the purpose of which was disclosed to the public by a wooden board hanging slantingly above it and labelled in black letters "Post Office." It was a portion of the duties of Bhowan Singh to convey his master's letters every morning to this bureau in a sealed bag, which was presently borne away, together with the local correspondence, by a ragged individual armed with a spear festooned with bells, to be delivered at the distributing centre at headquarters some twenty miles away. The orderly at the same time received the incoming mail, similarly protected, and returned with it to the camp—and it was in the course of one of these journeys that, in a secluded part of the road, he met Luchminia taking out the food to her husband working in the fields. Bhowan Singh stopped—Luchminia smiled—and they were presently in conversation. Other meetings followed.

The secret was so well kept by the young people that no suspicion of what was going on existed in the minds of any of the villagers. Dunput was of an unobservant and easy-going nature, and was moreover very well contented with his lot. There was no family, but his food was well cooked—Luchminia's manners were bright and cheerful, and she was tactful enough to avoid the customary wrangling and scandal-mongering which went on round the village well where, morning and evening, all the women gathered to draw water. Matters indeed were quite satisfactory in this Oriental Eden, until the serpent, in the form of the handsome young orderly, appeared upon the scene.

Like a great many other Indian villages, Banpur still retained an institution, perhaps not exactly cherished, which is no longer a feature of English rural life, and possessed its own locally supported idiot. This usually harmless individual, who held a certain status as one afflicted by the gods, wandered about the place, making some slight return for his upkeep by exciting amusement by his antics and ridiculous observations. Nearly every one had a kindly word or jest for him as he passed, and no one took any particular concern about his habits and movements. But for some reason he did not like Dunput, and one day when the latter said something unpleasant to him, he

burst into one of the sudden fits of anger to which he was subject, and retorted that he would not dare to speak in that way to the man who met his wife at the old ferry. Ooloo (the owl) had his more or less sane moments, and Dunput pricked up his ears at the remark and asked him what he meant—but the idiot only laughed in a foolish manner and ran off.

Dunput, not usually much given to mental exercises, pondered a good deal over the observation. As already mentioned, there was no child of the marriage—his wife was alone a good part of the day when he was working in the fields—and it is a regrettable fact that an absolute confidence in the integrity and morality of women is not a leading characteristic of the Eastern man. He was not, it is true, inclined to attach much importance to the idiot's remark, but his suspicions were somewhat excited and he determined to watch his wife.

The grass-grown track which represented a road, and which ran from the village to Manders Sahib's camp, passed Dunput's little mud hut, overgrown with pumpkins and similar climbing vegetation, on the outskirts of the well-wooded settlement; and also led to the patch of ground where he carried out his somewhat primitive agricultural operations. In the early morning of

the day after his encounter with Ooloo, he provided himself as usual with a sort of short hoe, and, omitting any details of his toilet but greeting the sun with a few texts from the Puranas, sauntered off with a blanket round his head, as if to his labour. But this was not his real object, and after going a short distance, he slipped into a grove of trees by the wayside and from which he could see the entrance to his hut, lay down in the long grass, and patiently waited to ascertain if Luchminia went abroad and where. In about half an hour he perceived her stroll down the road, and presently, after looking round, approach a large cotton-tree just off the thoroughfare and go behind it—emerging again after a few minutes and returning to the hut. As soon as she had disappeared within the dwelling, he went to the spot she had visited, and at once saw that a small patch of mud had been placed on the farther side of the trunk, and that in this three dry grains of rice had been inserted—two above and one below. The mark was not likely to have attracted any particular notice, but it had a great effect upon Dunput. His own education as a boy had not only been very slight, but also extremely evanescent, and as for Luchminia's it was absolutely "nil"—her mother having regarded anything of the kind as altogether unsuited to

women, and indeed hardly decent or seemly in a respectable wife. This was the intellectual condition of every one in Banpur—as it is indeed of the rural classes generally. As a consequence, a system of communication had been evolved by the adoption of certain hieroglyphs, marks, &c., which had their particular significance to any one possessing the key to the code. The existence of this system is not unknown to the authorities, and has at times been a source of some anxiety. The cultivator recognised at once that his wife was secretly in touch with a stranger, and his blood boiled with rage and indignation at the thought. The thing evidently to be ascertained was—who was the man? He retreated to his lair in the grass and waited for developments.

His patience was not long tried. In a very short time the smart young orderly, jauntily bearing his master's bag of letters, strolled down the road, and, after a glance round, proceeded to the tree, looked at the mark, brushed it off with a gesture of annoyance, and proceeded on his way to the camp. It was now all clear to Dunput, lying like a snake in the long grass close by. His wife had an intrigue with the orderly, and the mark on the tree was probably a signal to him that for some reason she could not meet him that day. He recollected, with rage in his heart, that he had

indeed mentioned the probability of his coming home earlier than usual, and that consequently he would not want his food brought out to him. He presently got up and went to his field; returning about midday with the remark that his head ached—which indeed was the case. He slept very little that night, lying perfectly quiet on his string bedstead and wrapped up in his blanket. Luchminia showed much solicitude at his condition —preparing his food with extra care, and bringing him cool draughts of water fresh from the well—all of which attentions Dunput seemed to receive with gratitude and pleasure.

In the morning he was better—so much so that he expressed his intention of taking a journey on the following day to the market town some ten miles away, to purchase seeds and other articles required in his agricultural work; as he was in the habit of occasionally doing. It was too far to travel both ways under a hot sun and settle his business on the same day; and he proposed to do as he had often done before, and that was to make the journey in the afternoon, transact his dealings, eat and rest after making his purchases, and start back to the village very early on the following morning. He expressed his intention of bringing back a new "sari" for Luchminia, and suggested that she should spend the night

with her parents. But, as he had anticipated, she saw no necessity for this, as the nearest hut was not far off, and she had the great yellow nondescript dog Génda to protect her if necessary. Early next morning he sauntered off to his field, nominally to make a final calculation as to the amount of seed he would require for sowing, and, on his way back a few hours later, cautiously inspected the tree again. Upon this he now saw a fresh daub; but this time with six rice kernels set in a row. He had little doubt that this was the signal to the young orderly, who usually strolled down in the evening to buy tobacco and chat to the villagers, that the coast was clear, and it would have disturbed the equanimity of the lovers had they seen the look of malevolent rage which crossed the cultivator's face and then gave place again to his ordinarily mild and inoffensive expression. But he took his midday meal with his usual appetite, and, after an unusually affectionate parting with his wife, duly set off on his expedition.

Dunput did not proceed directly to his destination at the distant market town, but, once clear of Banpur, made his way unseen through the crops to the old ferry the idiot had referred to. This was not more than a mile from his hut, and had formerly been used for crossing the great rushing

river; but, as so often happens in India, a few years before, this had left its old bed, and a more convenient crossing place had therefore been found elsewhere. The old channel had become a sort of backwater, not broad but very deep, and swarmed with crocodiles. The site of the old ferry was still used by "dhobis," or washermen, for washing clothes, &c., though boats were no longer kept there; and a little half-ruined shanty, formerly used as a toll-house, still stood on the opposite bank. Dunput was, however, not much surprised on arriving at the spot, to see a rough fisherman's "dug out" drawn up half-way out of the water on the shore. It was merely a hollowed-out trunk of a tree, and, as is usually the case, the wood had cracked in many places—though this does not disturb the more or less amphibious fishermen, who simply plug the openings with reeds and mud sufficiently to keep the primitive craft afloat. The cultivator, however, noticed that this one was particularly leaky, so he lifted up the rushes at the bottom of the boat to ascertain where the site of the mischief was; and this, he easily discovered, was a large rent out of which the reed plug had slipped. A sudden idea occurred to him. He had felt pretty sure, on seeing the boat, that the orderly intended to ferry his wife across the sluggish stream to the

empty shanty on the other side, as this was a very isolated locality—and he knew that, as a hill-man, his rival in her affections was not likely to be skilful in the management of such a craft as the one before him. He remembered, moreover, that Luchminia could not swim. A heavy swirl in the turbid water close by, which startled him while he stood thinking, apparently decided him on his action. He flung the plug of reeds far out into the stream, caulked the rent in the boat with merely a little mud, covered it over with the rushes again, and with a satisfied air proceeded on his journey. He had proposed to kill one or both of those whom he now regarded as his enemies, in the dark and either at the ferry or in the hut, with the heavy iron-bound staff he carried in his hand—but a Hindu never likes taking life brutally, and moreover there would have been great risk of detection and failure. His new plan, he thought, was far better. Perhaps unreasonably, it was against his wife that his fury was particularly directed.

Now Luchminia, when she made her signal on the cotton-tree that morning, had taken an even more decisive step than her husband suspected. Bhowan Singh had often urged her to flee with him to his home in the distant Himalayan mountains where he had a little land of his own; and

the girl (she was little more than a child), after many searchings of heart had at last yielded, and what she had recorded in the mud daub had signified her consent. It was quite dark when she stole out of the hut and was joined by her waiting lover, who embraced her closely-shrouded figure, whispered some reassuring and affectionate words in her ear, and clasped a quaint silver bangle on her arm. He was in plain clothes, and she was dressed like an ordinary field-labourer's wife and carrying a little bundle of her modest belongings. No one was about at this hour, and, taking short cuts across the fields, they started for the old ferry. She was very agitated and frightened, and, when an owl hooted, she stopped, and bursting into wild weeping, prayed to be allowed to return. But Bhowan Singh soothed her with loving words, and presently persuaded her to continue her journey. It was a calm, still night, but there was no moon, and a few light clouds partially obscured the stars in the sky. With the exception of a prowling jackal (a sufficiently bad omen) they met nothing on their way, and at length reached the spot where the boat, which the orderly had purloined from a fishing village higher up the stream, lay on the bank. All the girl's forebodings returned when she saw it, and she looked across the dark

sluggish flood moving between the desolate muddy banks with their coarse vegetation, on either side. The harsh scream of some wading water-bird, disturbed by their arrival, still further terrified her; but Bhowan Singh's arm was round her, and it was now too late to retrace her steps. She entered the frail craft, and he, taking up his paddle, pushed off from the shore with the words, "Pearl of my heart, now at length you are really mine." The girl threw back her shawl and looked up at her lover with a smile of affection—but next moment started up and screamed out that the boat was sinking. The orderly, glancing down, saw indeed that it was already half full of water, and turned cold with astonishment and alarm. He tried to turn the unwieldy craft round and to make for the shore, but he was unskilful and flurried—the light was bad—the water continued to rush in through the unsealed leak—and before many minutes had elapsed they were both struggling in the cold dark stream. Whether the rough boat sank, or was capsized by the orderly's strenuous but misdirected efforts, is uncertain—the whole thing was too sudden and unexpected for this to be known. The man rose very soon to the surface, and could just discern poor Luchminia being borne away upon the flood. He struck out gallantly to reach and save her, for he was an

expert swimmer — but, when almost up to her, there was a sudden rush of a great loathsome object through the water, a piercing shriek resounded in his ears, and his erring companion was dragged down before his very eyes! He knew only too well what had happened. She had been seized by a "mugger," or snub-nosed crocodile, and, wild with fear and fully aware of his helplessness, he swam madly for the shore. This, after much struggling, he reached safely, and then, exhausted by his efforts and his agitation, sank down senseless on the bank. In about a quarter of an hour he came to himself and peered across the silent current. There was nothing visible — woman, boat, and reptile all had disappeared. He stood vainly waiting for a long time for some sign or sound, but none came; and at length, staggering back to camp, managed to reach his shelter unseen, where, thoroughly worn out, he lay down and fell asleep immediately.

Meanwhile Dunput, pursuing his journey with unwonted celerity, reached the market town, and after considerable haggling with the grain-seller squatting in his shop with a smoky oil-lamp hanging on the wall beside him, managed to complete his business. He then made his way to the "sarai"—an open courtyard surrounded

by cubicles in which, for a small fee, travellers were permitted to pass the night—and having bestowed a few small coins on an itinerant holy man as a precautionary measure; declined to purchase a spavined horse from a Cabuli dealer; hidden his remaining money in his waist-cloth and the goods in his bedding; completed the customary squabble with the local vendor of food; eaten some parched grain; smoked his country pipe, and repeated a few sacred texts with great fervour—settled himself down comfortably to slumber. He cogitated over the day's doings for a time, it is true, but more with curiosity as to their probable outcome than with any regret; and it is possible that very few of his *confrères* would have been troubled with any great twinges of conscience regarding their action under circumstances where the frailties of an erring wife were concerned.

He rose with the first gleam of dawn and reached his village safely, and almost the first person he met there was Bhowan Singh, bearing out his master's bag of letters as usual. He was somewhat taken aback at the rencontre, but the orderly only greeted him with a friendly remark and passed on. Clearly he had no suspicions, and Dunput half hoped for a moment that his plans had miscarried. But his hut was

empty, and he very soon missed some of his wife's poor possessions. Noon came, but still there was no sign of Luchminia. He went over to her relations, but they could give him no information, and merely upbraided him shrilly for having left her alone when he started on his journey. Very soon the news spread, and a search was instituted for the missing woman —which was of course fruitless. Manders Sahib, accompanied by his trusty orderly, himself rode over on hearing the report, but nothing was elicited by his inquiries—the only villager who could have given a clue, the idiot Ooloo, having discreetly disappeared. In any case he would not have been likely to have yielded any assistance—regarding officials generally as dangerous creatures, whose dementia took the form of wantonly interfering with other people's peace and comfort. As for the examination of Dunput himself, it was of a most unsatisfactory character. He only knew that he had left his wife at home alone when he set out to the town, as she had promised to spend the night with her parents—that she had cost him fifty rupees (here her parents, present at the gathering, were understood to dissent)—and that now there was no one to cook his food and look after his comfort. It was difficult to be sure as to which of these

calamities was the cause of the copious weeping which accompanied the delivery of his evidence.

Manders Sahib and the police returned to the camp, and nothing more was heard of Luchminia. Dunput himself believed that the orderly had his missing wife somewhere in hiding; but he had no proof of this, and, had he given the grounds for his suspicions, he knew that people would have said he should not have left her alone under the circumstances, but have handed her over to her parents before starting. Moreover, it was a risky thing to bring an unsubstantiated charge against a "sahib's" official. The reflection that his own part in the affair was open to criticism probably did not weigh much with him, since it was not likely to be discovered—but, upon the whole, he thought it would be better to keep silence and do nothing.

It was about a fortnight after poor Luchminia's disappearance that the discovery of the bangle in Manders Sahib's quarry took place. He showed it to Bhowan Singh, who shrugged his shoulders, and made the observation that it probably belonged to some native woman carried off by a "mugger" while bathing—a suggestion which, as we have seen, commended itself to his master. A visiting rajah, also gratified with a sight of the ornament and the story of its find, after comment-

ing on the unusual skill essential for the slaying of crocodiles, offered the remark that it looked as if it were of Nepaulese workmanship; but of course this conveyed no suggestion of its history to the "sahib's" mind. Dunput himself never heard of the gruesome discovery of the bangle at all, but to this day believes his wife to be residing somewhere in the Himalayas, and is seriously thinking of marrying again;—while the orderly has nothing but kindly thoughts of the cultivator as an amiable, but particularly simple, man.

A FAMINE IN INDIA.

In the spring of 1878, a European Power was rubbing its eyes at the annoying spectacle of an Indian force (which it had been led to believe was being shadowed by British regiments in its own country) quietly settling down in cantonments in Malta—ready for contingencies. As a consequence of which, the present writer, just appointed to India, was hustled out of England and instructed to report himself at this island on his way out in case his services might be wanted with an expeditionary force—a proceeding which brought home to him the facts that he was no longer a free agent, and that he had very early become a very small pawn in a very great game. But before his ship reached the stronghold of the old Knights of St John, a great British statesman had spoken at a conference with sufficient directness to cause an appreciable alteration in the situation; and the danger of a war had passed. So, while the writer stood

ready to succour his country in her hour of need, his services were not utilised, and he was ordered to continue his journey straightway to India—the attitude of the harassed and over-worked officials indeed suggesting that had he preferred an even warmer destination, no obstacles would have been placed in his way.

The vessel, as a matter of fact, was bound for Australia, but it was possible to tranship at Point de Galle (the harbour at Colombo was not then completed) and to get on to Calcutta *viâ* Madras —and at the last port a number of officers of the Indian Army, who had been on special duty in connection with the famine in that Presidency, came on board. To the relation of their doings the author listened with all the interest of a youngster to whom all such matters were strange and new—little dreaming that in after life somewhat similar experiences would fall to his own lot. Such, however, was the case, for, some eighteen years later, famine appeared in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, where he was serving. Earlier famines seemed to have come more or less as surprises, but for some years a quiet, unostentatious work had been carried on by the civil authorities in developing and improving the records of land tenure, areas occupied by different crops, changes of tenancy, &c., which

Village cooly women.

it is the duty of the village accountant, known as a "patwari," to prepare. The position, attainments, and degree of supervision of these humble but most useful Indian officials had been improved—the earlier blunders in the settlements of districts had been largely corrected — and the responsible officers had at length at their disposal a mass of valuable information on such subjects to help them in their forecasts and arrangements, and to assist them in estimating the probable quantity and value of a coming harvest. Practically every village had its "patwari," with his dirty, portable, and comprehensive field-map prepared from the records of the Survey of India; in which every tiny plot of land is numbered and entered in an index, with the name of its tenant, the area he holds, the crops he has planted, his status, and the rent he is paying. As the uneducated rural watchman with his vernacular registers is the ultimate source of information concerning crimes, births and deaths, and numerous other details affecting the village community, so the "patwari" with his curious map is the original source from which agricultural statistics are derived, and the foundation upon which to a great extent revenue assessments are based. With adequate control the results are remarkably correct.

In the case of the famine which it is attempted to describe, and with the successful conduct of the measures for the alleviation of which the name of Sir Antony MacDonnell, then Lieutenant-Governor of the Provinces, and now Lord MacDonnell, will be for ever honourably associated, the probability of trouble had been early recognised and foreseen by the authorities. The rainfall had not been satisfactory in the two preceding years, and in a country where the population and the means for its support are so closely balanced, the fact to experienced Anglo-Indian officials had an ominous significance. Then the cold-weather rains had been scanty. The fate of millions on such occasions hangs in the scale. Finally, simple but pregnant phrase, "the rains failed." This does not necessarily mean, the Western reader should understand, that no rain falls—it falls, perhaps, but at the wrong time. Presently it became only too clear that the spectre of want was hovering over the land. Anxious Collectors and Magistrates, poring over the district officials' reports and returns and scrutinising the village maps, sent cautiously-worded screeds to headquarters breathing their fears. And here the Head of the Government and his Secretariat, keenly watching the growing situation, elaborated the plan of campaign to be followed

later, should unhappily the enemy appear in force.

What had happened in the present case was that the monsoon rains had commenced satisfactorily, but had stopped prematurely, with disastrous results. It was soon recognised that a vast calamity was impending. The period of the normal hot weather was long past, and the parched earth panted for moisture. A hot, dry, desiccating wind blew day and night over the land, scorching the eyes and cracking the skin, and whirling the dust in eddies over the barren fields. Everything was seen through a red haze —the temperature falling but a few degrees as darkness set in. So far as the eye could see, the land, which should have been as green and smiling as an English landscape, was now one vast grey and arid plain. Birds had disappeared, save for the vultures, kites, and crows; most of the cattle were dead or had been sold; deer had fled into the jungles or the vicinity of the large rivers—little animal life was left beyond the village dogs and jackals, and even of these but few, subsisting in ways not pleasant to speculate upon. The Chief Secretary tore open the daily telegrams from the districts, all of one monotonous tenor, "no rain, crops withering, prices rising," and anxiety grew and grew. The ryots, or small

cultivators, rose each morning at the first break of day, cast wistful eyes at the vault of sky "like the inside of a copper bowl," drove their scraggy oxen, where they had survived, to the well whose contents were rapidly dwindling away —and struggled on against fate. Let it be remembered that a large proportion of the lower classes in India is thrifty, but improvident, and that many live almost from hand to mouth; though a position which in a cold climate would be wellnigh intolerable, has not the same terrors in a land where house rent and expenditure on coals and clothing are almost negligible quantities, and where children so fully recognise obligations to parents. Nevertheless one must eat, and now there is no tillage or cultivation possible, no work to be done, no wages to be earned, and the cost of food-stuffs rising, rising. The baked earth defies the plough; seed is scarce and dear; the standing crops are drying up or being used for fodder; and merchants and those who have grain, are storing it up for higher prices. The "mohwa" (*Bassia latifolia*) crop, a great stand-by as a source of food supply in many parts of the country, is a total failure. The prospect is gloomy indeed.

Then the great wheels of Government begin to turn. The machinery, standing ready, is set

in motion. Hurried meetings are held at head-quarters; sheaves of telegrams fly out from the Secretariat offices; the men at the helm in the districts inspect, organise, and call together such Indian gentlemen as help, not talk. The Lieutenant-Governor flies from point to point wherever his reassuring presence is most necessary; welding together the parts of the great organisation into one harmonious whole, and infusing his energy and confidence into his officers and subordinates. Government forests are thrown open for the free grazing of cattle; the collection of revenue is suspended; advances of money are made to cultivators, to deepen the wells or to make new ones excavated through the alluvial soil and cased inside with coils of wicker or wattle to prevent the walls from falling in—and to buy seed, if perchance after all it may be possible to get in a late crop. "Test-works" are opened, by which it may be seen if cultivators are willing to accept a wage somewhat lower than normal, and so demonstrate the reality of the distress. No violence or robbery yet—these will come later unless prevented. In the account of the famine of 1837-38 we read, "the beginning of trouble was marked by a spirit of lawlessness and freebooting throughout the country. Neither the stores of the merchant, nor the grain in transit, were safe from

attack. The starving people forgot all rights of possession, and violently laid their hands upon the neighbour's supplies."

Time goes on. People abroad at night see mysterious troops of men, women and children moving along the road in definite directions. They are fleeing from the distressed areas to parts where rumour has it that rain has fallen and work may be had—the old traditional remedy in such troubles. They have few encumbrances, for the village money-lender has nearly all their little household goods. Relief-works are started by the "Sirkar" (Government), where a definite wage may be had for definite work. Engineer officers of the Public Works Department map out the sites for new roads and other schemes; immense numbers of little reed-huts arise; food supplies, wood for fuel, working tools by the thousand, are brought in by rail or carts from a distance; wells are protected from pollution—and medical officers see to the cleanliness of the site, watch the character of the food sold by the shopkeepers (the cheap "kasari dal" often causes paralysis), and organise the field hospitals. For behind all this misery of want stands the ever-threatening spectre of cholera.

Presently great ant-hills appear all over the country. Armies of human ants, erstwhile tillers

of the soil, dig, carry earth, shape the new road, or excavate the water reservoir as a provision against future famines. Crime—petty crime mostly; thefts of agricultural produce necessary to keep body and soul together—follows famine, and extra police watch the populace. Public kitchens are established at which the children can be fed while their parents are at work; "infirm gangs" deal with the weak and old; and special arrangements are made so that new-comers on the works shall be dieted at first on gruel and such-like farinaceous food-stuffs—since the effect of a solid meal on a half-starved person, with the intestinal absorption glands more or less atrophied from disuse, is frequently to bring on an attack of dangerous or even fatal dysentery. The crowds on the midnight march gradually dwindle away, for there is work at home. The last to come in for help are the jungle tribes, whose knowledge of the edible value of wild plants, berries, roots, and fruit has enabled them to hold out longer than other people, and who cling most obstinately to their remote villages. These are strange, timid, half-wild folk seldom seen by other than the sportsman; with eyes and ears as acute as those of the animals they live among, and with bodies clad in weird garments dyed in sombre colours and venerable dirt. The distressed and those

unfit for work, are succoured in the villages—and town committees are formed to seek out and relieve those silent sufferers, the high-caste women and children who will die rather than take to occupations which their caste and social status forbid. The generous heart of England is touched, and the sympathy with the dumb millions of fellow-subjects far overseas is demonstrated in a practical manner by the remittance of large sums to supplement the resources of the country. For it is now obvious that, save in those fortunate districts where irrigation from canals is possible, the "Sirkar" stands between millions of men, women and children and certain death.

Speaking roughly, relief works are divided into two classes, (1) large works of general utility, such as the making of roads and the excavation of reservoirs, affording employment to usually not less than 5000 labourers, the bulk of whom are obliged to leave their homes and reside on, or in the neighbourhood of, the works; and (2) lesser projects serving some local purpose and affording occupation to a smaller number of workers in the neighbourhood of their homes. The first step on a large work is to divide the people into gangs containing a certain number of groups of diggers and carriers (usually one digger to three carriers) and aggregating about sixty effective workers.

To each gang is assigned a certain measured task, calculated to represent a reasonable day's work for average unskilled workers, and this task is usually subdivided among the component groups. Weakly persons are assigned proportionately lighter work. When the allotted task is finished, the labourers are free to go, having earned a daily wage, calculated on a sliding scale according to the price of grain as sufficient to purchase a day's ration. To maintain discipline, and to make the work unattractive to persons who could support themselves or find employment elsewhere, a proportional reduction is made from the wages if the task is not completed. The destitute and incapable are relieved in their homes—which is found to be a far better plan than opening poorhouses.

A very important matter on these relief works is the preservation of the purity of the water supply; for this is necessarily scanty and almost entirely obtained from wells, and if one of these be infected with the germs of such a disease as cholera, it will become a source of widespread and fatal sickness. The plan adopted is as follows. The wells likely to be used for drinking purposes by the labourers are examined, and, if found pure, are guarded from contamination for a week before being required, and the water-supply arrangements are perfected before the workers arrive on the

spot. Foul wells are absolutely closed. Should sickness break out, the wells are disinfected at intervals of two or three days, until the gangs of labourers are split up and drafted off to other works. From the labourers, Brahmans (from whose hands all castes can drink) are selected to draw water for Hindus, and "kahars" (another caste) to distribute it. The vessels employed in drawing and distributing this are ordinarily of metal, and kept scrupulously clean. Muhammadan water-carriers supply Muhammadans. When disease appears, or a move is contemplated, search-parties go in advance to select the sources of supply and protect them, and to see that the infection does not exist in villages in the locality to which the workers are proceeding. Guards are mounted over every source of drinking water, and disinfection regularly practised in every case where doubt as to the quality exists; even if no disease be present. These arrangements are carefully carried out, for no measures taken are more effective in the prevention of sickness on such occasions than these.

Sometimes in spite of all precautions, however, cholera will appear on the works. Then the encampment is broken up, and the people, gathering up their tools and small belongings, tramp off to a fresh selected spot some four or five miles away,

where the ground has been already mapped out, the wells protected and guarded, and any holding bad water permanently closed. The sick are left behind in charge of medical subordinates, and all huts and shelters which have been occupied by infected gangs are burnt to the ground. This usually arrests the outbreak, but if not, the procedure is repeated. Plague is in the country, but seldom appears on the works—it is not a disease of camps.

In a campaign, which indeed this is, the preparation of reports, returns, and all such matters, must be subordinated to the task of beating the enemy, and on such an occasion as a famine the clever writer of screeds is not of much use. It is strenuous, active men we want on these works, and this is the chance of the resourceful determined officer. He is on his horse or elephant, here there and everywhere under the pitiless and blazing sun, organising, encouraging, and, where necessary, punishing sharply. He understands and speaks the "patois" of the villagers, though his acquaintance with high-flown Persian be crude; he knows, and respects as far as possible, the intricate workings of caste; and is to all the embodiment of the great "Sirkar," to whom in his extremity the ryot looks, next to his God, for help. No place here for the agitator and

his neurotic disciple just fresh from school or college.

It is interesting to watch the demeanour of the people on these works. All is bustle, but quiet orderly bustle; each gang having its headman usually chosen from the village from which the majority of its constituents comes. In and among the crowd move the officials, European and Indian —the former many of them officers of the Indian Army upon special duty, whose tone of combined command and sympathy, learnt among their own men, is just what is wanted here. Over all is the District Officer and Magistrate, or his representative. He is "the man on the spot," and as such to be trusted; and just as he may be competent or otherwise, so will the enterprise succeed or fail. Some of his methods might not commend themselves to Western minds, and not unfrequently a discussion is closed by the summary words, "Hukum hai, bus" (It is the order, enough); but as his predecessors have been looked up to and trusted for generations, the command is obeyed without cavil or resentment. It may sound a preposterous thing to European ears, but it is nevertheless a fact, that were even half an officer's orders questioned, opposed, or brought before a legal tribunal, as they would very likely be in England, the present administrative machinery

in India would have to be immensely increased, or come to a full stop within six months. One must go to India to learn the full meaning of the word "prestige." It has been remarked that "the East is not the West," and the apparent superfluity of the observation is not likely to strike the administrator in India, who has learnt to appreciate the "inwardness" of the expression! What "prestige," for want of a better word, means in India, is perfectly incomprehensible to any one not acquainted with the people of that country. It is everywhere a most precious asset, but it is invaluable in the East. It has been lowered by circumstances largely unavoidable, but would that all could realise how religiously, when and where possible, it should be preserved!

There is probably no more important or exacting duty required of officials in India than the satisfactory conduct of famine relief operations. Famine is unlike most other calamities. It is no sudden outbreak or uprising, capable of being dealt with and extinguished rapidly and conclusively. It is like a sullen almost irresistible flood, which rolls slowly but inexorably over the land leaving widespread devastation and misery behind it. It brings violent epidemic disease, and almost excusable lawlessness, in its train. It occurs in its greatest intensity at a period of the

year when even Indians can hardly in safety venture for long out of the shade of a dwelling or a large tree. It paralyses the simple and resigned masses, with their fatalistic ideas and humble acquiescence in the designs of an inscrutable Providence. Left alone, they would bow their heads and wait in patience for the end. Not that there are wanting Indians of nerve and resource, but they must be "pulled together" —"enthused," as the useful American phrase runs —and here it is that the virile alien comes in. All consideration of "rights," "expressions of public opinion" (save the mark!), &c., disappear in a conflict with such a cataclysm as a great famine. What is wanted is a leader—a dictator —and how for such a post the trusted European is welcomed! No question of "racial feeling" here—no time for flatulent verbosity or fatuous declamation—the people must be saved. Watch the District Officer with his staff of both races at his work: He is like a general directing his forces in the field—and peace has its victories as well as war!

Such a man acts chiefly through his lieutenants, the officials, European and Indian, of the district, who naturally know best the circumstances of the locality — supplemented by others sent down to help him by the Govern-

ment, or lent by the Military Department. But this assistance is usually insufficient, and he has to recruit very largely on the spot. Utilising the services of that valuable class of officials known as Tehsildars, on such an occasion as the one it is attempted to describe, he draws largely on a floating and often very competent population known as "umedwars" or "hopers"—very frequently men of good caste, character, and intelligence, but unable, from defective literary accomplishments or private reasons, to compete successfully with their more nimble-witted opponents for public posts. The only hope such young men have of getting a start in life in the public service, is by demonstrating in unusual circumstances the stuff of which they are made; and for them a famine, or other similar sudden call on resources, provides opportunities. The present writer has conceived the impression, after some experience, that a great store of useful material of this description, available for efficient minor administrative work in districts, is more or less wasted at the present time. A certain amount of power, of course, rests with the higher officers of exempting such men and youths from passing the standard intellectual tests, but possibly this power might be advantageously extended. Recruits under such a system would be usually

grateful—which the self-sufficient "pass" students very seldom are. Many of the latter seem to take up the attitude that, having met the wishes of the Government by embarking upon a most uncomfortably strenuous literary enterprise, the authorities are bound in justice to find them lucrative appointments at its termination. This unfortunate delusion is shared by the "fail"—and hence the disappointment and resentment which are largely at the bottom of the present agitation and unrest.

Nearly all the people on the works are cultivators of the soil; uneducated, as the term is understood in Europe, but knowing and intelligent in the affairs of their modest calling; for in a country like India it behoves a man to learn his own business well, and to leave other matters to members of castes whose forefathers for many hundreds of years have followed the same trade or occupation. Our villager is an unambitious man, simple, industrious, occasionally given to outbursts of inconsiderate revenge, but, as a rule, patient and contented. He knows and cares nothing about educational progress and elective institutions, and his political horizon is practically bounded by the District Officer and his staff. The Queen-Empress Victoria, the late King-Emperor Edward, and the present King-Emperor,

are spoken of with reverence as little less than deities, and always as benevolent and good. The Government of England, the Viceroy and his Council, are to him abstract entities of whom he hears in a general way occasionally, but for whom he considers his own personal affairs can have but a very limited interest. It is doubtful, indeed, whether he cares much as to who is ruling the country—what he asks for is to be protected in the enjoyment of his life, property, and religion, and otherwise to be left alone. His attitude, for instance, when attacked on his methods of cultivation by the officials of the Agricultural Department, leaves nothing to be desired—and he goes on doing exactly what he did before. The wheelbarrows introduced on some famine works by certain enlightened officials were gratefully accepted, and carried on the heads in the usual native fashion in place of the normal basket!

In fulness of time, relief comes naturally. A little cloud, "no bigger than a man's hand," grows and grows, and presently the heavens open and all nature rejoices. Areas which have climbed rapidly from "observation" and "scarcity" to "famine" districts, drop speedily into their earlier official designations, and once more there is normal work and wages for all. The earth grows green as by the stroke of a magi-

cian's wand; men and cattle put on flesh rapidly; the ant-hills gradually dissolve and disappear; civil officials return to their normal occupations; the subaltern pays his debts and buys that polo-pony—and a Gazette sprinkles a certain number of decorations among those who have not fallen by the way. Only are left the water reservoirs and the long new roads ribbing the country, to disturb the arguments of the agitator, and to afford themes for conversation among the grey-beards under the council tree as to how the "Sirkar" saved the people in the bad times past.

It fell to the lot of the present writer, as Sanitary Commissioner with the Government, to take some small part in the operations carried out in connection with the famine now described; for cholera and disease are normal accompaniments of such calamities, and moreover it is very requisite to watch and inspect relief works to see that the food is not only adequate, but also of good quality. Occasionally, for instance, such cheap and deleterious grains as "kasari dal" (which, used in excess, as said before, produces paralysis) were detected among the food-stuffs being sold by dishonest dealers to the labourers. It is necessary to remember that the latter drew their wages for tasks performed, and purchased

their food themselves from "bunneahs," or grain merchants, on the works. The enormous population made it an obvious impossibility to see to the actual and systematic distribution of such food in each family or group of workers, and the people were most careless in this respect. The officials could, and did, draft off the old, weak, and feeble to separate "infirm gangs," the sick to hospitals, and uncared-for or orphan children to field-kitchens, &c.; but beyond this they could do little. One of the great difficulties was with families of young children. The father and mother were busy; he, and to some extent she, on the works—and the wives also had to do the cooking. The children often fought like young animals over the shares allotted to them by their parents, and the stronger seized the lion's share, while the weaker pined away. Thus, in a family of six perhaps, two or three would be sleek and fat, and the others reduced to great emaciation. The field-kitchens in such cases proved most useful. Then the milk of suckling mothers often failed, despite extra nutriment being given to them. It was an observed fact, which the author does not profess to explain, that the women as a rule kept in better condition than men. Some thought it was because the latter worked harder, or that women were less well fed normally and

so felt the deprivation less; while others, less charitable, put it down to their opportunities of filching more than their share while cooking. Certain it is, that one of the most distressing results of prolonged privation is the deadening of even maternal instincts by the craving for food. The worst cases of extreme hunger and destitution, in the writer's experience, were to be seen among the primitive jungle folk in tracts of country like Bundelkund, where the half-wild people rarely leave the woods, and only came in in large numbers together, with their almost nude bodies reduced to perfect skeletons—driven to abandoning their remote villages like sailors deserting a sinking ship. Ordinary people, if clinging to their homes, could be persuaded to come to the relief offered; but who could bring out these poor timid creatures from their fastnesses in the silent jungles? Nothing, as said before, saved some of these tribes from something like extinction but the almost uncanny knowledge of the edible value of strange roots, berries, grasses, &c., which these people possess. Bundelkund, indeed, suffered, with its always scanty crops and its high proportion of such classes, more than any other part of the Provinces. Relief works were pushed as far as possible into the forests, and the writer recalls many long expedi-

tions, made partly in dog-carts constructed solely of bamboo, and partly on horseback, through the still, hot, cloudless nights—expeditions so timed that the destination might be reached at the first gleam of light, in order if possible to permit of an inspection being made, arrangements completed, and the return journey accomplished, before the pitiless rays of the burning sun became almost intolerable. Sometimes it would be to deal with an outbreak of cholera, awful in its rapidity and extent, and to attempt to check its ravages by methods already described; but very often on such occasions the mortality and alarm had been so great that on arrival it was found that the panic-stricken people had already bolted, preferring the risk of starvation to almost certain death. Those were grievous times, and with gruesome incidents not a few. Sometimes, when sojourning in a tent on such works with the Magistrate and Civil Surgeon (who, one or both, as a rule accompanied the author on such expeditions), we were almost driven wild by the cries and wrangling of the dogs and jackals—the cause of whose persistent presence we knew only too well. And the inspections of the thousands of sufferers drawn up by the side of the road!—long lines of gaunt specimens of humanity, passing from mere bags of bones up to comparative

robustness as the effects of steady rations began to tell! The women held their long shawls over the children they were suckling, but it was necessary to see the condition of these infants too—and, more than once, when the mother drew aside the covering, she fell back with a shriek as she recognised that her little cherished mite was just dead! But enough of such tragedies, though the memory of them will always linger in the writer's mind.

As to what famines in India were like prior to our occupation, we have, in the absence of statistics, only tradition and story and what is written in old books, to guide us. We read of hundreds of sufferers drowning themselves in despair at a time; of people fighting for blood and offal in slaughter-houses, or carrion in the fields; of frequent sales of children, or their exposure to wolves and wild beasts; of unburied dead littering the country-side; of the general prevalence of crime, violence and robbery,—and other horrors. Even allowing for Oriental exaggeration, these calamities must have been very awful, and never likely, under our *régime*, to be seen again. It would be unjust, however, to conclude that the Indian rulers in former times were callous and indifferent to the sufferings of their subjects—indeed we know that this was not the case. The Emperor Shah Jehan, for instance, it

is on record, remitted large amounts of revenue, and opened depots for relief purposes. Doubtless also large money grants were made in a regal manner to the distressed; though those conversant with the ways of the East will doubt whether any large proportion of such munificence ever reached those for whom it was intended. But, as a matter of fact, they were to a great extent helpless. In the absence of established sea routes, railways, canals, and good roads, it was simply impossible to get the food to an afflicted locality. Nearly all grain and such-like food-stuffs were carried in slow-moving country carts; or by bands of that interesting nomadic caste the Banjaras, with their bold independent men and their handsome jewel-bedecked women, who drove their long caravans of patient plodding oxen bearing on their broad backs such produce in sacks, from one end of India to the other. These people are fast disappearing with the advent of better means of transport; though the writer has sometimes met them in the wilder parts of Central India. Such methods of carriage must have been altogether inadequate for dealing with widespread scarcity, and there can be no question that the loss of life on such occasions was appalling. Whole districts were practically depopulated.

A famine in India to-day differs from one in the

same country in times past. Then it was a true famine of food; now, with our network of railways and good roads all over the land, food is quickly and readily transported from areas of plenty or from abroad to the scene of scarcity or distress, and it is really a famine of labour. That is to say, the food is there, but no wages can be earned wherewith to purchase it. The function of Government is to supply work and the remuneration for the same, and in this way to keep up the heart of the people, and at the same time to avoid the demoralisation which would attend indiscriminate charity and relief.

A difference, too, exists between a famine in a tropical country and one in a temperate climate, and upon this point perhaps the author may be permitted to quote what he wrote in his report on the great famine in 1896-97, in the United Provinces. "The facts seem to be that, as is indeed well known, the poison of malaria is constantly working in the constitutions of all people in India. In a normal year few natives of the country escape an attack of 'fever.' But if the people be well nourished and robust, they throw off attacks which, if weakened, they succumb to. People do not die so much from actual starvation: they die principally because they have no longer the vital resistance necessary to com-

bat an insidious, ever-present foe peculiar to the climate."

In this connection it may be also noted that in a year when the deficient rainfall results in famine, there are some compensating advantages observable in certain areas. Malarial fever is more particularly prevalent in localities where the water-table is normally a high one, and is especially rife during the drying up of the rains. In tracts where such conditions exist, a deficient rainfall is an actual blessing, and the improvement in the public health there is sufficiently marked to in some considerable degree counterbalance the evil consequences of drought in other and differently constituted soils and situations.

What the average income, and its purchasing power, of the native of India really are now, and what they used to be formerly, have been the subjects of a good deal of discussion by more or less informed authorities. But when one knows the difficulties of the inquiry, astonishment is excited by the confidence exhibited by such oracles. For example, among the agricultural population (at least, let it be said, two-thirds of the people in the country) payment is largely made in kind; and how is the value of this to be really accurately estimated? Then, if a man earns so much, what do the rest of the family, women and children,

bring to the family stocking? And they all help more or less. Many village servants, such as potters for instance, increase their income by doing odd jobs, agricultural or otherwise, in their spare time. It is hardly too much to say that the requisite statistics for the satisfactory elucidation of such questions are only partially available, and that really reliable and trustworthy registration in India on such points is not fifty years old. The first regular census was taken in 1872, and the Statistical Department at Calcutta was not created until 1880.

Then there is the incessant controversy always going on regarding famines past and present, and a vast number of crude and misleading deductions are drawn respecting the impoverishment of India as demonstrated by recent distress. Just the same line of argument might be adopted with regard to cholera. The writer, in his official capacity, has had to deal with masses of statistical records on the latter subject, and would have no difficulty in showing, by a comparison of recent (and fairly accurate), with early (and very inaccurate), mortality tables, that British rule has immensely increased the ravages of this disease, and that there is nothing more deadly than sanitary progress! Errors, in the older statistics, are almost always errors of omission. The real explanation in both cases is of course that we *do*

know the present conditions, and have little more than tradition and rumour to guide us as to what happened in the past—though these are sufficiently detailed and reliable to show how awful were the consequences of war, famine, and disease in times antecedent to our rule. Our legislators to-day are fully acquainted with the real position, but the pathos of the matter lies in the disclosure of how little interest was formerly taken in England generally in the affairs of India, when so many hard-headed Britishers accepted as gospel the assertions of self-constituted authorities on the subject. It is much to be regretted that more retired Anglo-Indians, really entitled by reputation and experience to speak on such subjects (an important proviso), do not enter the arena of politics; since silence may be misinterpreted, and judgment is very liable to go by default.

The fact seems to be that, as regards the financial position of the ryot in past times, the labourer or small cultivator then had few requirements beyond his food, raiment, and house—and these of the simplest description. In the absence of acquaintance with what were in those days regarded as luxuries, their want was not felt. But it was inevitable that, with the march of material progress and the closer contact with Western men and ideas, he should presently

learn to crave for them and come to regard them as necessaries. His food was probably cooked just as well in an earthen as in a brass pot; his (or her) village-made garments were probably just as comfortable and useful as the more attractive-looking imported fabrics; and umbrellas, patent-leather shoes, and such-like articles, were not regarded as essentials. His wages have increased, but not so fast or so extensively as his new requirements; and this ratio is more likely to go on than not. Such conditions are by no means peculiar to India. From the point of view of the social economist, his position is so far satisfactory that he certainly sells his produce abroad for more than he could obtain on the spot, and he has more to spend therefore on his personal comforts. The only thing is that he has only recently discovered that they are comforts, and formerly did very cheerfully without them. He is not provident, and puts nothing by out of his profits against a rainy day. After all, so great is the local demand, that not very much agricultural produce is exported—it is said not to amount in value to more than six shillings per head of population. Sir Thomas Holderness, in 'Peoples and Problems of India,' has very succinctly and fairly summed up the situation. "The Indian standard of

living," he writes, "is not that of Western Europe. It is lower; but poverty is a relative term, and the difference of standards in such a comparison is not merely one of degree but of quality. The Indian standard, such as it is, has risen since the establishment of British rule, and the improvement is due to that rule. It is still rising, and so far as one can see, it will continue to rise."

It is probable that something like the last word has been said about the best system of famine relief. The lessons learnt in recent troubles have been embodied in codes which, while permitting the necessary elasticity in working, afford excellent indications for general guidance. A fundamental rule in all such emergencies is to be in good time. A rupee spent to-day is often worth ten spent to-morrow. The tendency of Indian officials in reporting to superiors, is always to make the best of things and to cry peace when there is no peace; so that incessant vigilance is required in watching events and verifying statements from subordinates in outlying tracts of country—as well as in stimulating the cultivator to bestir himself ere the time for effective action is passed. It is depressing in famine times to watch the ryot sitting in his village hoping against hope for the appearance of the longed-

for rain clouds, and putting off from day to day the digging of the temporary well in case perchance the necessity for the expenditure and labour may not arise—and this, indeed, while he still has the money in his possession for the purpose. That meteorological conditions will be unfavourable at intervals in the future as in the past, is of course inevitable, but that we shall ever again suffer from such awful visitations as occurred in the old days is, in the writer's opinion, very unlikely. The greatest and most effectual protective measures against famine are the construction and maintenance of railways, canals, and good roads. All these enterprises have made vast progress during late years. The official accounts of expenditure under such heads are too complicated to enter into here, but it may be unhesitatingly affirmed that outlay in these directions may be quite fairly regarded as coming within the scope of the application of a Famine Relief Grant. The country now has a network of railways more than thirty-two thousand miles long, spread over it, and (very important matter) good feeder roads linking up the rural areas with the arteries of traffic. Railways are immensely appreciated in India, and all timidity in using them has long since disappeared; although the writer well remembers the little offerings of flowers which the villager

used to lay on the lines at the level crossings as a propitiation to the mysterious power which moved the engine, before he ventured upon a railway journey—and also the forebodings which accompanied the early efforts to place fetters upon the sacred Gunga by the construction of the large iron bridges. One used to hear that the deity would certainly abandon the river and adopt the Nerbudda; but this has not happened, and indeed now the same disabilities exist in both localities.

No such misgivings were excited by the extension of canal irrigation operations, for the robbing of the rivers had been carried out, though very imperfectly, long before our occupation of the country; but occasionally, as in the Central Provinces and Berar, it is necessary (or was before the recent famines) to offer the water at a very low price at first to encourage its acceptance. Irrigation on a large scale is from tanks and rivers. In some places, as in Bundelkund and Central India, immense reservoirs of water were constructed in long past times—the natural features of the country, where low hills partially enclosed an area, being utilised by the closing of the gaps between these elevations with huge artificial dams; thus causing the formation of deep lakes of many hundreds of acres in extent. These magnificent embankments, of great breadth and thick-

ness, and with their inner aspects faced with massive blocks of stone, are still mostly in existence and fulfilling their beneficent purposes. Very picturesque are these great expanses of deep clear water; upon the surface of which the lotus lily spreads its great green leaves and displays its handsome flowers, and which are the haunts of countless wild-fowl of all descriptions. On the margins of some of these lakes rise, straight out of the water, imposing stone mansions and fortresses, the strongholds of wild caterans in the past; and in many are little islets, very commonly the situation of ancient temples and shrines, said to be of Jain origin, and now, alas! mostly in ruins. They have suffered far less from the destructive influences of nature than from those of iconoclastic bigotry, but our indignant reflections are chastened by the recollection that the same senseless vandalism has not in past times been unknown in England.

The most usual method of conducting important irrigation operations, however, lies in utilising a large river by constructing a masonry dam across it, through which a greater or lesser quantity of the stream can be allowed to pass by means of sluice gates; while the channel above is tapped by a canal through the entrance gates of which the amount of water required can be led and directed, and subsequently distributed by sub-

sidiary channels to such tracts of country below where the demand for it exists. Canals in India are often far larger than those commonly met with in England, and the level of the water in them is frequently higher than that of portions of the surrounding country — a fact which, while necessitated by the principal object of their existence, renders them often of little value for navigation services. They are many of them noble examples of engineering skill, and, near the hills, the numerous smaller rivers are carried over and under, and even through, them, in a marvellous manner. They are mostly fringed with belts of trees and high vegetation growing on the elevated banks upon which the towing-path runs; while here and there, at intervals of some twenty miles, are placed the little rest-houses occupied by officials on inspection duty. Very refreshing it is in the hot weather to pass from the sweltering plains around, to one of these shelters, and to watch the clear swirling mass of water hurrying on to moisten the parched-up fields in the country below!

Canal irrigation in India has a twofold recommendation—it is a steady unresented source of revenue to the Government, and it is the best protection of all against the affliction of famine. Seventeen millions of acres of land at least are

now so served, and this area is daily increasing; as witness the recent great extension in the Punjab.

Dire calamity as it is, a famine in India leaves far less trouble behind it than a bad cholera or "fever" year. In cholera particularly, the disease sweeps away the robust young breadwinner almost as readily as it does the old and diseased; but in a famine the waifs and strays, such as lepers, blind folk, beggars, and others subsisting normally on a now impossible charity, are the first to succumb, and the result is that it becomes to some extent a matter of the survival of the fittest. As the birth and death rates of the succeeding year usually testify, the average health and condition of the population is probably never better than in the period immediately following such a visitation. There is no cloud without a silver lining, and it may be justly claimed that famine operations, properly conducted, undoubtedly bring the races very close together and make for confidence and esteem.

Kipling has told us what happened to a "globe-trotter" who tried to "stick out" a hot weather in the comparative comfort of an Indian station. Nowadays we have many such individuals sitting in the cold weather at the feet of strange in-

structors in the big cities, and returning home in the spring saturated with false information. It would possibly do some good if a few of these itinerant reformers could obtain a "working notion" of Indian administration on a famine work!

A PRIVATE FEUD.

A FERTILE source of discussion between returned Anglo-Indian ladies, is as to the relative merits of English and Indian servants. As a rule the palm is assigned (with some reservations) to the dusky servitors of the Orient—especially by those who have recently suffered from a dearth of the supply of the regular article in England, and have wilted under the baneful influence of the female (with gamekeeper's pockets) who consents to "stand in." They remember the host of respectful menials always available in India, and they forget the various annoyances which attend their ministrations—some of them more or less peculiar to the East. These are, however, very real at the time, and this was the experience of Lane Memsahib.

The immediate cause of the trouble was a golf ball. Lane Sahib, I.C.S., Joint Magistrate, having studied himself into the best paid and probably most efficient service in the world, had become considerably disquieted by the increasing rotundity

Loading carts in camp.

of his figure. The obvious antidote to this affliction was the adoption and pursuit of some regular and strenuous form of exercise, and it had appeared to him that the most suitable field for this new departure lay on the links. He purchased several books on the subject of golf—all written by noted experts at the game, and exhibiting a literary talent which probably, up to the time of the appearance of the works, had not been suspected by the friends of the authors. From these authorities he ascertained the meaning of certain cryptic words such as "niblick," "stance," "stymie," &c. — searching vainly through his stores of erudition for some indications of their origin, and eventually accepting them merely as proofs of the extreme antiquity of the recreation, since they appeared to go back to some remote period, when language was in its infancy, and concerning which all knowledge had long since perished. Few could discourse more ably on the theory of the game, or had more thoroughly studied the views of its most competent exponents. He had been a little disturbed, it is true, by the different forms of the advice tendered as to the best methods of making the various strokes, inasmuch as it appeared that any departure from the special entanglement of limbs recommended by the authority he was perusing, was inevitably

fatal to the acquisition of even a moderate degree of dexterity in the art. No two golfing heroes appeared to tie themselves into quite the same sort of knot when performing their remarkable feats—there were no professionals available—and he had no friend to whom he could apply for instructions without serious loss of dignity. Eventually, like so many waverers in other lines of thought, he abandoned all the modern tenets of the golfing creed, and reverted to the simple teaching of one of the earliest apostles of the game, which bade him merely "shake himself down naturally before the ball, and hit."

All this, however, is somewhat of a digression. It is needless to say that such crude and unorthodox procedure did not lead to much progress in the direction of proficiency, and experiments conducted in the privacy of his own premises presently led Lane Sahib to the conclusion that, before bursting on an admiring public, a course of steady practice in a secluded locality was desirable—and this he saw was fortunately attainable in camp during the tours he performed in connection with his official duties. An Anglo-Indian camp, at all events of one in the position of a Joint Magistrate, is quite a big affair, and is moreover often furnished to even the extent of luxury. The personal domestics—"bearer," table servants, cook, water-

man, tailor, washerman, "sweeper," "ayah," grooms, &c.—all probably total up to something like fifteen or twenty people at least. Then there are the "chuprassis" (orderlies or messengers), clerks, police guard, tent-pitchers, camel-men, and drivers of carts—and when to these are added suitors, witnesses, &c., sojourning in the locality during the hearing of cases, it will be seen that the total population probably amounts to some fifty or more; which means that, although a certain number of the retainers will sleep in the open under the trees, the encampment nevertheless is a large one, and comprises a good many tents of different sorts and descriptions. There is very commonly a large open plain in the neighbourhood of a camping-ground, and not infrequently the tents are pitched upon the very edge of such a "maidan," as it is called.

Lane Sahib utilised the opportunities which such localities presented, and conscientiously devoted his evenings to practice—directing his attention more particularly to the difficult art of "driving," and, as time wore on, developing some faint symptoms of skill in the proceeding. He was in the habit of selecting a spot and erecting a "tee" (another primeval utterance), upon which he placed the object of his attack and smote it with varying results—contorting his body at the

same time into the tangled condition depicted in the illustrations adorning the pages of his guides on the subject. It will occasionally happen, according to the doctrine of chances, that the veriest tyro will strike the ball so correctly that, to the infinite joy and surprise of the player, it will travel quite a long distance—and this on one memorable evening occurred to Lane Sahib. The little white round object sailed away, and not only cleared the plain, but also disappeared among the row of tents on its margin.

It was his custom on the occasions of these exhibitions to place a "chûprassi," one Moti by name, to recover the balls after their erratic journeys and bring them back to his master. This duty was not as a rule arduous, but, on the evening in question, the totally unexpected behaviour of the ball appeared to have demoralised the retriever, and he presently returned with the intimation that he had lost sight of it when it passed the tents, and that it was not to be found. It was a nearly new ball and evidently possessed peculiar merits, and, after vainly searching for it himself, the golfer offered four annas (about 6d.) to any one who could discover it. This failed to arouse any enthusiasm among the population of the camp, and the promised reward was gradually raised until it reached one rupee—

which speedily had the effect of bringing every one to the search. This was, however, quite futile, and eventually the owner proceeded to his tent and to his dinner. But, about an hour later, the "bearer" informed his master that Moti, after a renewed hunt, had found the missing projectile at an immense distance from where it had been struck—and the rupee was accordingly sent out to him with a few words of gracious commendation.

The "Junt-Sahib" (Indian rendering of Joint Magistrate) was an enterprising man, and had quite early taken to himself a wife; and she, her two young children, and the "ayah," or native nurse, were all with him in the camp. Now between this "ayah," Maiki by name, and the "chuprassi" Moti, a feud had long existed; carefully concealed from their master and mistress, but nevertheless very bitter. It had originated in the fact that Buddhoo, the "sweeper," was Maiki's husband, and it was the perquisite of the former to have the leavings of the "sahib's" meals, which he shared with his wife. Only very low-caste Indians would eat such food, and on one occasion Buddhoo, squatting on the ground waiting for his meal like a big vulture, had been contemptuously kicked by Moti; which had brought upon him such a torrent of abuse from the "sweeper's" wife close by, as would have

greatly astonished her mistress had she been within hearing. The "chuprassi" had not been slow to retort, and had always since then, when brought into contact with the pair, addressed them colloquially in terms which seriously reflected upon their origins, mode of life, and probable eventual fate. The "ayah's" replies at such interviews were not lacking in force and directness, and there was consequently very little love lost between the belligerents, both of whom looked anxiously forward to an opportunity of gratifying their revenge. Little uncomfortable incidents were always occurring — as when Maiki nearly broke her nose in the dark by falling over a mallet which some one had carelessly left just outside the tent in the path she used when leaving her mistress the last thing at night—and Moti always examined his shoes before donning them since he had found a scorpion in one just as he was about to put it on. But these, of course, might have been merely accidents.

It unfortunately fell out that when the golf ball was lost, Maiki happened to be in the sleeping tent, just before dinner-time, dusting her mistress's clothes, and as the wicker blinds known as "chicks" were down, she was enabled to observe what was going on outside without being seen herself. She noticed the projectile run past

the tent and stop, and observed Moti saunter to the spot, and, after a hurried glance round, pick it up and put it into his waist-cloth. She attached no importance to this circumstance until she presently heard from Buddhoo of the reward having been offered for the lost article, when, quickly perceiving that her enemy was unexpectedly delivered into her hands, she promptly informed her mistress of what she had seen — who duly informed her husband. Lane Sahib was too well acquainted with the Indian character to take serious action on the mere word of a "sweeper's" wife without further evidence, so he made no remarks to any one, but merely substituted another "chuprassi" in the office of "caddy" without giving any reasons. Both Moti and Maiki fully understood the situation, but the former might have remained unaware of the source of the "sahib's" information but for the unwontedly cheerful demeanour of the "ayah" when they met, and the indiscreet utterances of the somewhat obtuse Buddhoo among his friends round the camp-fire in the evenings. Moti, however, kept complete control over himself, and received the intimation that his services would no longer be required with a meek "salaam" and absolute silence. Nothing further transpired, and the incident appeared to have closed.

The camp moved on almost daily, and all went well until about ten days later, when it was pitched close to a lake crowded with water-fowl. The "sahib" was very fond of this form of sport, and upon the top of the contents of one of the large country carts which formed part of the transport and bore the camp equipage, was carried a light shooting punt, made of tin, and large enough to hold a sportsman and a native boatman to row or pole about the frail craft through the water. Lane Sahib therefore cheerfully set out in this after breakfast, with a semi-aquatic villager behind him, and very soon had bagged a few duck and looked forward to a good day's enjoyment. But presently a cry from his companion made him turn round on the stool upon which he was sitting, and he saw with alarm that the craft was half full of water and rapidly sinking. By strenuous exertions on the part of both the occupants they managed to get within some fifty yards of the shore, when the punt sank; but fortunately the water was sufficiently shallow to enable them to reach the land, wet up to the armpits, and with the loss of the boat, cartridges, and lunch-basket. The sportsman was extremely annoyed and surprised, for such an incident had never occurred before—so he halted a day, and, with the aid of some almost amphib-

ious fishermen, got the craft at last to shore and examined it. There were two ragged holes in the bottom, which had probably been loosely stopped with something which had presently fallen out. Moti was among the first to draw his half-drowned master to land, and mentioned casually later to the "bearer" (who he knew would promptly inform the "sahib") that he was not at all astonished at what had occurred, as the "ayah" often got into the boat when she went on with the camp at night—sleeping upon some straw placed in it—and that, moreover, she had done this the very night before the accident. The story on inquiry proved to be true, and Maiki in consequence had an extremely bad quarter of an hour with her master and mistress. She acknowledged her fault of sleeping in the punt; declaring, however, that it had done no harm, but that some one had made the holes in it to get her into trouble—and a careful examination of these certainly seemed to support her statement, inasmuch as they had clearly been made with some sharp instrument. But again, in the absence of any definite evidence, Lane Sahib, although he had his suspicions, took no action upon them.

Nothing happened for another ten days, and the camp had marched about another sixty miles,

when one morning a very dirty letter, written on rough country paper, reached the Joint Magistrate by post. It ran :—

"HONORED SIR, — The petitioner, Moolchund, "bunneah" (shopkeeper), of Danpur, knowing of the fame of the "sahib" for giving justice to poor man, writes to inform him that Moti, "chuprassi," who eats the salt of the Cherisher of the Poor, is always robbing poor "bunneah," and not paying bill for food in camp. All men saying this wicked one blackening "sahib's" face by his "badmashi" (evil conduct). Many other things are known of this vile one, which pen refuses to write. This wretched one is greatly fearing Moti, "chuprassi," who is often beating poor man, and this is for the "sahib's" eye alone and to be kept secret.

MOOLCHUND,
Bunneah, Danpur."

The Joint Magistrate was not unaccustomed to the receipt of similar petitions, but they were usually anonymous, whereas this one was signed. He remembered that the camp had halted at Danpur a few weeks before, so he summoned his confidential Indian clerk and instructed him to draft a letter to the "Tehsildar" (an Indian official with magisterial powers) of the locality,

requesting him to make inquiries from Moolchund as to whether the accounts at the camp had been properly settled. A reply came in a few days to the effect that this was so; that the "bunneah" was perfectly satisfied; and that he absolutely denied having sent a complaint to any one. Obviously nothing could be done, to which the clerk agreed; adding in a sort of soliloquy "very often 'bunneahs' forgiving 'chuprassi's' bill." Lane contented himself with ordering the clerk to see that at any rate in his camp all his subordinates paid, and Moti settled his accounts at each halt with the air of a man discharging a pleasant and customary duty. But he was perfectly well aware that the issue of the orders was due to some communication having been made to the "sahib."

A week or two after this, a vacancy occurred in the appointment of head "chuprassi"—the old tenant of the post having retired on pension. Moti had fully expected to be given the vacancy, but a good deal of odd information concerning his character had come to his master's ears since the incident of the loss of the golf ball. The "ayah" had not failed to spread the news of what she had seen from the tent, and all the servants felt they had been fooled over the matter. He had never been popular, though feared, and

now that he had fallen into disfavour, a good many tongues were loosened. There were rumours of rajahs and similar visitors having been kept waiting, to the loss of their dignity, until such time as they had greased the palms of the "chuprassi" Moti on duty at the "sahib's" tent; and it was pretty certain that he had only paid for his food on compulsion. Altogether, Lane did not consider him a proper subject for promotion, and consequently put another man into the post. Moti respectfully asked what his fault was, but was merely told that the selected person was the more suitable. He "salaamed" and went away without replying, but with rage in his heart. He had not the slightest doubt but that the loss of the appointment was due to something the "ayah" had told her mistress, and which the latter had repeated to her husband.

It is the custom when camping in India, to send on all the tents which have been used during the day, to the next camp by night—most of the subordinates and servants accompanying them. Only the sleeping tents are left behind, and these are despatched, as soon as vacated, on the following morning. This arrangement very well suits Indian ideas on the subject, for natives prefer to travel in the cool night rather than under the rays of an Eastern sun in the daytime, and

they usually accomplish a march of from ten to twelve miles in time to put in three or four hours' sleep in the very early dawn at the termination of the journey. They get a lift occasionally on the carts, and also snatch a little sleep during the day; but still it is the best plan to halt every three or four days to give both men and animals a long unbroken nocturnal rest. It was on the occasion of one of these night halts, a few weeks later, that a very serious affair occurred. The camp was pitched in the middle of a large grove of trees, and (with the inclusion of the watchmen) all its inhabitants were buried in slumber—many of them on thick beds of straw spread out under the trees on the ground, upon which they lay covered up with their blankets. All was quiet and still, when suddenly there was a cry of alarm from some one, loud shrieks, and a column of fire was seen to shoot up from beneath a large tree under which the "ayah" and her husband were sleeping. The blaze was visible over the whole of the grove, and lighted up the scene. Lane, awakened by the shouts, jumped out of bed, and, hastily donning an overcoat, rushed to the spot, where the servants had already beaten down the flames and pulled out of the ashes of the straw, the two shrieking sufferers. Buddhoo had got off,

wrapped up as he had been in his blanket, with comparatively few injuries, but Maiki was terribly burnt, and appeared to be almost moribund. She was carried to a tent, and Lane, after giving her some brandy, sent off to the little town close by where there happened fortunately to be a small dispensary, the Indian doctor of which came immediately and dressed her wounds. She was almost unconscious and could give no information, nor could Buddhoo himself tell much more. He had simply awakened to find the straw of their couch in flames. The village watchman close by had seen no one and heard nothing, and had probably, according to the custom of his kind, merely waited until he thought the "sahibs" were asleep before settling himself down comfortably to rest. When day broke, Lane made a full but profitless inquiry. Every one was present except Moti—but the explanation of his absence was simple enough. He had been sent off by his master the previous afternoon to the Magistrate at headquarters in Doulatpore, some fifty miles away, with a letter on some urgent official business, and with instructions to catch a night train at a wayside station about ten miles from the camp, so as to deliver his missive the first thing on the following morning. Nothing of the least importance

resulted from the interrogation of the other subordinates, and the Joint Magistrate, after thinking a little, called for his horse and rode off alone. He went at a hand-gallop straight to the railway station; ascertained from the officials that Moti had left by an early morning, and not the night, express; sent back a message to his wife that he was suddenly summoned to headquarters but would soon return—and caught the next train to Doulatpore. He very strongly suspected that the "chuprassi," after his somewhat ostentatious departure in the afternoon, had in reality hidden himself in the neighbourhood of the camp until it was sufficiently dark for his purpose, and, after carefully stalking the slumbering watchman, had set fire to the "ayah's" bedding, and then bolted to catch the train he had been ordered to proceed by—but which, however, he had missed. All of which surmises were perfectly correct.

Moti, meanwhile, had arrived at Doulatpore, delivered his letter to the Magistrate, received a written sealed reply and was sauntering with this back to the railway station, when he met a hired rattle-trap conveyance, like a box on wheels, coming down the road. The ragged driver, squatted on the front seat, was urging two diminutive half-starved ponies to greater

exertions, and Moti, glancing at the passenger inside, recognised, to his horror, his master, Lane Sahib. What was the meaning of his unexpected presence here? He must have come in by train, and quite possibly had interrogated the stationmaster as to his emissary's movements —for a "chuprassi" in his uniform and badge would be readily noticed and identified. The bright glow which he had noticed above the encampment when he looked back over his shoulder in his flight, had shown him that his incendiary efforts had been successful, and that the "ayah" and her husband had by now been probably burnt to death. His plans were rapidly made. He had not been seen by Lane, so he turned off the main road, and, as soon as he was clear of the houses, ran like a hare across the fields to a small railway station in the opposite direction to that from which he had come. *En route* he threw his uniform coat, "puggri," and badge into a high crop, and, when he reached his destination, presented the appearance of a slouching villager with his blanket drawn over his head. He took a ticket for as distant a station as his available money permitted, and simply disappeared. Nothing was ever seen or heard of him again.

Lane had a long talk with the Magistrate,

and it was determined to arrest Moti on suspicion; but the capture, it is needless to say, was never effected. Indeed, it is very doubtful whether, even if he had been found, anything could have been brought home to him in the absence of any definite evidence regarding incendiarism; and no further action was attempted. The "ayah" eventually recovered, but it was rather a relief when she resigned her situation and went off with her husband in response to a very urgent (and entirely fictitious) summons from some suddenly afflicted child in a distant part of the country. The subordinates and servants no doubt had their suspicions as to the explanation of the whole affair, but, native-like, made no comments. Lane and the Magistrate were the only persons in possession of all the subtle details of the feud, and they kept their knowledge to themselves; merely hazarding the conjecture publicly that the absent "chuprassi" had probably gone off on account of his annoyance at failing to obtain his expected promotion. Lane Memsahib engaged a Madrassi "ayah" (who drank), and, later on, "got out" a European nurse at considerable expense, who married a bandsman in a British regiment two months after her arrival. She was much annoyed at the result of these experiences; but as, when

recently in England, her housemaid was detected coming back from the town in a cloak over her mistress's ball-dress (in which she had been photographed for the purpose of presentation of the picture, as an encouraging gift, to a needy swain), she hesitates to express her views as to the relative merits of domestics in the East and West, and confines herself to the general remark that she hardly knows what to say about servants nowadays, anywhere. Her husband is equally uncertain on the point, but views the question in the philosophic spirit which is engendered by long contact with the Indian race, and continues his golf—a form of recreation in which this mental attitude is particularly valuable. He has never, however, repeated the phenomenal performance which originated all the trouble, and his handicap remains irremovably fixed at twenty-four.

LIBRARY
OF THE

A "JUNGLY" STATION IN THE PAST.

SURAJPORE, where the writer was stationed early in his service, would not have had charms for everybody as a place of residence. It was not only out of the way, but it was out of the way for India. Quite large scale maps of the country ignored its existence. No railway came near it, and petitions for the construction of one were met with official replies somewhat resembling that given by an unsympathetic Board in America—that it would consider the application when the town in question was visible to the naked eye. There were no Eastern buildings of any beauty or antiquity, and the structures erected in modern times by Western architects were of a purely utilitarian, and more or less hideous, character. There was no church, and the little cemetery only contained three white men's graves—two those of sportsmen killed by wild beasts, and the third that of an official drowned while duck-shooting. The "club," where the handful of Europeans for-

gathered when not in camp, was a single-storied, mud-walled, thatched building, consisting of two fair-sized rooms, and a smaller one in which the native servant in charge of the place kept the drinks, oil for the lamps, the punkahs for use in the hot weather, his personal wardrobe, and other heterogeneous belongings. One of the larger rooms accommodated a billiard table, more interesting to an antiquary than any one else; while the other contained a rough wooden shelf, upon which reposed about a hundred tattered novels rejected many years ago by a circulating library, and also held a table on which were deposited some half-dozen English papers every week. On mail day, all collected to this last literary feast; and on the following morning the pattern-sheet which accompanied the magazine devoted to female delectation was invariably surreptitiously abstracted by some early-rising lady who happened to be in the station — and was later on reflected in the shape and adornment of the garments worn by this isolated devotee of fashion.

The bungalows, some half-dozen in number, were long low structures with floors slightly raised from the ground, and with vast thatched roofs which not only covered the rooms themselves, but also the broad cool verandahs on three sides of the

erections. Each residence was situated on its own little hillock, and was surrounded by an extensive "compound," or rough piece of grassy land more or less enclosed by low mud walls about two feet in height—in which roamed the cow and calf of the proprietor, the donkey of the washerman, the goats belonging to the native establishment, horses and ponies tethered to long bamboos fixed in the ground, and animal odds and ends of sorts such as a tame black buck or a "sarus" crane, &c., which the "sahib" had picked up and adopted in the course of his wanderings. To one side of the "compound" stood the stables, and on the other was a long line of unpretending huts for the accommodation of the servants, their wives and families, and also of any casual visitors and relatives temporarily out of employment who were sponging on their friends until such time as something in the way of occupation should "turn up." There were lots of these modest tenements—indeed bungalow, stabling, and servants' dwellings were all on a very liberal scale, though constructed of the cheapest and most unpretentious materials. The impression was conveyed that the whole settlement was designed with a view to most elastic and hospitable requirements, by a kindly uninstructed individual with an unlimited command of land, mud, bamboo, string, and thatching

materials, but without the faintest glimmering of any form of architectural knowledge whatever. All of the bungalows had some sort of road running up to the entrance, and one or two had gardens attached to them in which grew Cape gooseberries, a few straggling oleanders, a dozen or so mango-trees, some half-wild rose bushes, and a few English vegetables. Every "sahib" kept a gardener, whether he had a garden or not—it being a time-honoured custom that such a retainer, in return for his pay, should supply flowers and vegetables without any embarrassing inquiries being made as to where he got them from.

Surajpore town itself was little more than a village, though, as the headquarters of the district (about the size of an English county) of the same name, it had certain well-constructed buildings, such as a court-house, jail, dispensary, school, &c.—but it possessed no factories nor any particular trade. There were no shops in the place where foreign articles could be procured—everything but country produce being brought in by carts from a town some seventy miles away. The bread was made in the jail—a most invaluable institution where small carpets, towels, blankets, and all sorts of articles, were manufactured by the prisoners. Even such a thing as a coffin (innocently billed to the sorrowing relatives by the

Street scene in small town.

imperfectly educated Hindu clerk, at a loss for the right word, as a "carcase box"), had to be made here. Convicts in India learn many trades during their incarceration, and jails therefore ought to be useful centres of technical education; but, as a matter of fact, a discharged prisoner only occasionally utilises his acquired skill, for, in the absence of any other source of instruction, everybody at once guesses where he learnt it. The settlement was truly a very remote and inaccessible spot—and to get there you travelled a certain distance by rail, then crossed a broad river by a pontoon bridge in the hot and cold seasons and in a country sailing boat in the rains, and concluded your journey by a passage of some forty miles over a fearful unmetalled road in a palanquin carried by coolies, and accompanied by a ragged and jocose ruffian who ran by its side holding up a lighted torch to keep off marauding animals or men, while he lightened the labours of his friends by a continuous droning song of considerable facetiousness, but lacking in some elements of delicacy and even decency.

It might be assumed from the foregoing description of Surajpore, that the European community there was not particularly pleased with its lot—but such was not the case. It consisted of the Magistrate, Joint Magistrate, Superintendent of

Police, Engineer, Forest Officer, and Civil Surgeon. The first two were married, and no doubt for their wives the life was somewhat monotonous; though they were both cheery women, and, being daughters of old Anglo-Indians, found a good deal more to interest and occupy them than would have been the case with ladies strange to the country and unable to speak the language of the people. But the men were all good sportsmen, and the sport was excellent. The station itself was picturesque and well-wooded, and every road had its avenue of shady trees; the climate was certainly rather feverish in the rainy season, but then the hot weather was short and fairly mild, and the cold season long and delightful. The jungles came up to within a few miles of the settlement — spreading away, with intervals of open country and cultivated fields, to where on clear days we could see the lofty peaks of the delectable mountains, the mighty Himalayas. A small, clean, bright river ran through the place and yielded very fair fishing, and a good-sized "jheel," or lake, which held many water-fowl in the winter, was only a few miles away. You could hear the "sarus" crane, the partridges, and the quail, calling, the bulbuls singing, and the king-crow bullying some other bird, as you woke in your bed in the early morning; and you could

stroll out in the afternoon with your rifle and be pretty sure of getting a black buck (*Antelope bezoartica*) quite close to the station — though these animals did not carry such good heads as they do in some other parts of the country. Altogether, despite its drawbacks, there were certainly what land-agents call "amenities" about Surajpore—and India is essentially a place where, if a man is going to enjoy life, he must cultivate tastes and hobbies and rely largely on himself for amusement and relaxation.

> "A man's best things are nearest him,
> Lie close about his feet."

In the cold season we were all dispersed more or less, camping in different parts of the district carrying out our various duties, but in the hot and rainy seasons when we were driven into our bungalows, we did our best to relieve the monotony by social meetings and functions. We had a lawn-tennis court, and organised billiard tournaments of which the result, on account of the character of the club table, was always surrounded with pleasing interest and uncertainty, and we never indeed really satisfactorily determined our relative merits as orthodox performers. Then we had frequent dinner-parties, given by the host or hostess in what is known in India as "camp

fashion." The crockery, glass, silver, &c., being usually scanty and probably only sufficient for the current use of the household itself, it was customary for the entertainer's servants to draw upon the resources of the guests on such occasions; so that you very likely used your own china, one guest's tumblers and another's knives and forks, and so on — while your "chef" foraged in the bazaar for receptacles for flowers and table decorations, and, in the absence of any semblance of taste or acquaintance with the subject, occasionally produced some very weird and striking effects.

At these banquets the *pièce de résistance* was invariably a stringy turkey or a saddle of mutton —the provision of the latter being a matter of arrangement perfectly understood, but tacitly and politely ignored, by the guests. Beef fit to eat was unprocurable, but to provide edible sheep we maintained an institution known as a "mutton club"—usually run by the doctor. This owned some twenty sheep, fed on "gram" or chick pea and thereby rendered possible of human consumption, placed in charge of a shepherd — the cost of the upkeep being met by subscriptions from the members. An animal was slaughtered every week and divided into five parts—the legs, forequarters, and the saddle — and a subscriber

received all of them in turn. But by an unwritten law, when a member gave a dinner-party he received the saddle in lieu of the joint to which he was otherwise entitled; and hospitable arrangements were thereby much facilitated. Every guest brought his table servant with him, and the subdued wrangling of these domestics with the "khansamah" carving the joint outside the room as to the priority of their masters' claims and the character of their helpings, punctuated the pauses in the conversation at the dinner-table itself. Five-and-thirty years ago the rupee was worth one and ninepence, and everything was much cheaper—except, perhaps, European clothes and other articles of adornment. But our demand for the latter was not great—most of us being attired in suits of "khaki" drill or Cashmere wool "puttoo," copied from some decayed, but formerly fashionable, Western garments by an aged "durzee," or tailor, squatting in the verandah of his customer's house. We generally ran to champagne at these gatherings, unless you preferred brandy-and-soda. Whisky-and-soda was, for some unknown reason, hardly ever drunk in those days, and was quite as seldom seen as brandy-and-soda is to-day. Of course we had no ice, but water and drinks were cooled by being placed in glass vessels in a small wicker basket

and covered with wet hay. This basket, hung from the branch of a tree, was kept constantly swinging by a servant; and it was wonderful how effective this simple arrangement was.

The stories we used to hear of the beer-drinking capacities of Anglo-Indians in old days seem to have been fairly true. The liquor was in bottles, and as one of these was emptied it was rolled under the table, while the servant replaced it by a full one. An old colonel, just retiring after a long service at the time the writer first joined, narrated to him an incident which he said he well remembered as having occurred at a mess-table when he was a subaltern. The liquor had been freely circulating for a long while after dinner, and the last thing he recollected was that all the diners, save two, were snoring under the table. One of the survivors was the commanding officer (a seasoned vessel), who was trying to pull himself up by hanging on to the long beard of the venerable Muhammadan domestic standing behind his chair; while the other—an extremely hard-headed youngster—was leaning over the board crying, and ejaculating at intervals in a maudlin tone, "Oh! Colonel, what a —— shame!" But "nous avons changé tout cela." To-day the Anglo-Indian public is as temperate a one as you would find

in any part of the (civilised) world. No doubt in those past times the mortality among Anglo-Indians was very great, but still it is marvellous what many of them did as regards marching, fighting, shooting, &c., under a tropical sun; and perhaps it was as it used to be with the old fox-hunting squires in England, who, after getting comfortably drunk overnight, were nevertheless in the saddle at daybreak, and by strenuous exertion to a great extent eliminated the imbibed alcohol before replacing it again in the afternoon!

Surajpore was a fairly healthy little town, though at one time a dreadful cloud had temporarily rested on its reputation in this respect—and this is how it came about. Bisheshur Dyal, the dispensary "baboo," or clerk, compiled the voluminous returns of births and deaths sent into headquarters from the outlying police-stations in the district (which, as said before, bore the same name as the town), and when the numerous and informing tables were all ready, they were signed by the Civil Surgeon, and sent on by him, through the Sanitary Commissioner, to the Government. One hot sultry afternoon, the clerk, lightly attired in a waist-cloth, was squatting in a small room with open doors at the dispensary, calculating out his aver-

ages and ratios; refreshing himself at intervals with pulls at his country pipe and draughts of water from a brass vessel beside him. It was a Hindu town and consequently swarmed with monkeys, some of which, in a tall tree close by, interestedly watched the scribe at his labours, and, when he began to nod and presently fell asleep, promptly descended and bore off his valuable papers. Bisheshur Dyal, waking up at the noise they made, gave chase with many execrations, and, after hurling a good many projectiles into the tree, eventually recovered his records, though in a very dilapidated condition. He was extremely flurried and angry, and, as bad luck would have it, had been engaged at the moment he lapsed into slumber, in calculating out the death-rate of Surajpore town from the number of deaths among its population. He completed his work from what he imagined were the right sheets among his mixed and mangled collection, and laid the tables a few days later before the Civil Surgeon for signature. This officer, with culpable carelessness, did not wade through the long columns of figures, but, affixing his name and title, sent them on to the Sanitary Commissioner. That officer (also very much to be blamed) countersigned and sent them on, along with his Report, and without any very

searching investigation, to the Secretariat. It seems difficult to credit, but it appears that the records slipped through the meticulously grinding wheels of this august office and even through those of the still more elaborate piece of machinery at Simla, without comment; and eventually reached the authorities at home.

But fortunately there was in London a body of most conscientious and painstaking men, who, after perusing their contents, almost dropped the tables with horror. "Where," said they, "is this plague-spot Surajpore, in which the annual death-rate is 950 per thousand! It is clearly totally unfit for human habitation, and should be evacuated and abandoned at once." It was a dreadful business.

So the Imperial Government sent back the returns and criticisms for explanation and report, to the Government of India—which forwarded them to the Local Government — which despatched them to the Sanitary Commissioner—who posted them to the Civil Surgeon — who scratched his head and sent for Bisheshur Dyal. That official, with many sobs and expressions of regret, stated that after the returns had gone, he had discovered that owing to the "misbegotten 'bunders'" (monkeys) he had made an unfortunate mistake—having taken the deaths in the

entire district of Surajpore (about the size of an English county), and worked out the death-rate of Surajpore town on the population of that centre alone. The explanation wandered back through the offices until it reached England, where it caused a great feeling of relief. The Civil Surgeon fined Bisheshur Dyal (who had been confidently anticipating transportation for life) the sum of one and ninepence, fired a few blank cartridges at the monkeys, apologised to the Sanitary Commissioner—and Surajpore's fair name was restored. And yet they say that people in England take very little interest in Indian affairs!

There was, as said before, no church, but once a month a chaplain came over and held a service on Sunday in the Court-house; when the Magistrate's seat was suitably decorated for the "padré's" accommodation, — a table was sent over — the Europeans in the station occupied the lawyers' seats — and a handful of Indian Christians settled themselves in the well of the Court. But sometimes in the cold weather, when officials were in camp, the European congregation was non-existent; and on one occasion the Magistrate read the lessons to the chaplain, after which the latter delivered an eloquent and forcible sermon on the sin of evil living to the amiable

and respectable Magistrate sitting disconsolately alone in a sea of empty benches! But he, good man, bore no resentment, merely remarking later on when they met at dinner at his house, that had he known beforehand the subject of the discourse he would have gone into the dock! In the rainy season, however, the station was inaccessible by road, and we were left to wallow in our iniquities. If a death occurred among Europeans, the service had to be performed by the Magistrate or the writer; and once, he remembers, when rain had fallen heavily and continuously for over a week, the body had to be sent back two days running, because the place was flooded and the grave was full of water which ran in quicker than it could be emptied out. It is a very sad recollection, for the deceased was a bright happy girl, who had only just come to the country, and who had died within twenty-four hours after her seizure, from cholera.

We did a little fishing in the river at times, for there were some fine "rohu," an excellent fish for the table, in it; and also a yellow-fleshed species with black bars on their sides, the name of which the writer has forgotten. The best plan was to get some large empty earthen jars and fix them with the mouth downwards in a frame

of bamboos—forming a sort of raft upon which the angler floated down the stream and fished on either side of it. A friend of the writer's, and perhaps the most well-known disciple of Izaak in that part of India, came down once to stay with him and to catch some of the yellow-fleshed fish referred to. We never had a bite, and the visitor, after exhausting every trick of the art, declared at last that he gave it up. But just before quitting the river, a wizened old native appeared on the scene, and, in reply to an inquiry, said he had come to catch some of these very fish. We assured him that it was hopeless, but the old man only "salaamed" and went off a little way to some swampy ground where he seemed to be searching for something which he presently found —and, returning, smoked his pipe quietly by the bank while we looked on. They had been cutting some reeds higher up the stream and a little island of these floated by at intervals. Suddenly, when one of these was approaching, the veteran seized hold of a cane out of the bundle which he had with him, slipped a line with a frog on a hook at the end of it into a notch in this, rapidly connected it with others so as to form a long rod, and pushed it out with the struggling bait to the edge of the floating mass of reeds as it came by. He had a three-pound fish on

in a minute! The expert smiled grimly. "Well, I don't know all about fishing after all," he said, "but don't tell this story." The writer fears he did!

There was some very fair pig-sticking to be had within a march; we hunted jackals and foxes with a "bobbery pack" of dogs of all descriptions; coursed hares with some greyhounds belonging to the writer; and occasionally had a hawking party with a rajah who kept these birds. Now and again, too, we had a wrestling tournament for the entertainment of the police and the young men of the place. The last is not a very exciting spectacle to a European. The contest is held in an arena dug about a foot or so below the level of the ground; the lookers-on squat on the banks of the excavation, and the "sahibs" are accommodated with chairs. The two competitors dance about watching each other and slapping their thighs (their garments are reduced to the extreme limit compatible with decency), and, after a variable period, get into grips with one another and one is presently thrown. But this is only the beginning of the proceedings. The winner must bring the back of both shoulders of the lower man on the ground at one time, before he can claim a victory; and the thrown individual instantly spreads out his arms

and legs to the fullest extent until he looks like a starfish—with his face on the ground. His opponent strives to turn him over; bending back his limbs and resorting to all sorts of tricks and manœuvres, such as twisting the joints, &c., which seem rather mean according to Western notions, but which, according to the code of Indian wrestling, are perfectly fair, to effect this end. It is a difficult matter to roll any one over in this position, and not infrequently the man on top suddenly finds himself caught in some cunning grip, and, before he knows anything about it, is himself in the posture in which he sought to place his opponent! But the contest often goes on slowly for an interminably long time, and although there are no doubt many movements unappreciated by the unskilled observer, the average Englishman finds an Indian wrestling match rather tiresome. The same may be said of the "nautch"; concerning which there seem to be as many divergences of opinion as there are about the "tango" at home. There appear to be "tangoes" and "tangoes," as there are "nautches" and "nautches." What the European sees of the latter is more likely to bring a yawn than a blush on his face, and as for the monotonous droning song and occasional crescendo screeches which accompany the per-

formance, the writer never met a Britisher who had the slightest understanding of the words of the refrain—which is possibly just as well.

Indians of any position of course never dance themselves. A story is told of an old-fashioned Indian potentate of high rank, who was invited as an honoured guest to be present at a European ball. He looked on at the proceedings for some time, and then, turning to his host, said courteously and in perfect good faith, "Tell them that that will do, and please thank them very much for the performance." A conversation was once overheard between two villagers looking up at a public hall in a large town in which balls and social functions were held, and one rustic was informing the other that that was where the "sahib-log" (English people) held their entertainments. "But what do they do?" asked his companion. "Well, first the 'sahibs' turn the 'memsahibs' round and round." "Yes, and what then?" "Well, then they give them things to eat and drink." "Yes, and what then?" "Oh, then they say flattering words to them." "Yes, and then?" But his informant's knowledge was exhausted. "Khuda janta" (God knows), he said, continuing his journey.

The rural inhabitants of the district were simple law-abiding people with whom we were on excel-

lent terms, and the headmen, usually small landowners, were as dignified, courteous, and intelligent in the pursuit of their special occupations as the class almost invariably is. Many families no doubt had furnished recruits for the rebel native forces in the Mutiny; but they had not sent them forth for the defence of their country, or from any such patriotic motive. The young hot-heads had originally gone off "on their own" to serve the "Sirkar"; just as in other times they would have enlisted under any other banner. Armies in India have nearly always been mercenary armies, and probably many men quite naturally transferred their services to their old hereditary leaders, the aristocracy and large landowners, when the latter declared against us. A few years before the Mutiny broke out, it is doubtful whether any real dislike or hostility existed against Europeans except in a few localities. But the Indian, under his polite and philosophic demeanour, hides a good deal of excitable sentiment. He is credulous and impressionable, and easily swayed by the demagogue—and (what is not peculiar to him) the savage sometimes lies very near the surface. His reticence and self-control are well-nigh perfect, but now and again he lets himself go in a very violent and unexpected manner.

The writer has been in a plague riot which nearly caused the death of two Europeans, where the ringleaders had been his constant companions for weeks together, carrying out the measures for the prevention of the spread of the disease, dressed in flowing white garments, courteous in speech and action, and apparently acquiescing in all that was being done. And here they were, all of a sudden and evidently by conspiracy, with nothing on but a "puggri" and a waist-cloth, clubs and axes in their hands, mad with anger, and shouting words of fury and abuse! We could hardly believe our eyes and ears! Happily no bad results followed. For two weeks the mob was at bay, and then matters were satisfactorily adjusted without the use of force, and once more the principal rioters (several of them most respectable men) were walking round again, "clothed and in their right mind," with the officials! Very little ill-feeling was harboured —they said "the string was too tight and had snapped," and in our hearts we acknowledged that the string *had* been tight. The incident, however, made a considerable impression on us all, and explained a good deal we had read regarding troubles in the past.

Is there sufficient thought bestowed to-day upon the circumstances and conditions which imme-

diately preceded the Mutiny? It happened less than sixty years ago, and there are still some alive who took part in it. There is a voluminous mass of literature on the subject, and nearly every one has read of what occurred in those mournful times and has formed some notion of the sequence of events and the explanation of them. Probably the average man has a picture in his mind of a sudden uprising of a fanatical soldiery joined in more or less by the general population, and presently resulting in scenes and incidents of almost unspeakable horror. Then came the strenuous and magnificent struggles of the British, assisted by their Indian allies from the Punjab and the Himalayas and a small loyal remainder of the sepoys, to quell the rising—struggles attended with deeds of self-sacrifice and matchless heroism never surpassed in any age or clime—until at last, after much bloodshed, our rule was triumphantly restored. Names of brave and wise soldier-statesmen are imprinted on our minds in connection with the stirring story, and also those of a few of the leaders of our foes—prominent among the latter being that of the miscreant Dhundu Punt, better known as the Nana Sahib. In these days the name to many is merely that of a treacherous monster who exercised great power among the rebels, and who was chiefly responsible

for the appalling massacre of Cawnpore. His history, however, is instructive and worth considering. The deposed Peishwa of the Mahrattas had been permitted to live at Bithur near Cawnpore, with the title of Rajah of the former place. He had no legitimate children, but adopted this Nana Sahib, to whom, when he died, he left about four million pounds sterling. The late Peishwa had drawn a pension from the British, but this was refused on his death to his adopted son, as by English law it had lapsed in consequence of the failure of heirs male. Despite this disappointment, however, Nana Sahib appeared to be desirous, while carefully preserving his religion as a Hindu, of being regarded as an English gentleman — spoke English, furnished his house and entertained his guests in European fashion, and was quite *persona grata* among the civil and military officers and residents in the neighbourhood. He was regarded as a good example of the high-bred native of the Anglo-Indian type. Few, if any, people suspected the indignation and hatred which under his courteous bearing must all the time have been raging in his breast! Probably only an Oriental could have played the part with such astounding duplicity and success.

When an ordinarily quiescent volcano suddenly begins to vomit forth fire and lava, the fact comes

to the country at large more or less as a surprise. But the actual dwellers on the side of the mountain have usually heard, for some time before, the ominous rumblings which they know forebode trouble, and have warned the neighbourhood. There had been plenty of indications that all was not right in India. Those who lived among the people had often voiced their fears and reported their misgivings to the authorities, but Lord Canning and his advisers appear to have attached little importance to such warnings, and it is said indeed that some officials were actually censured as alarmists. It is hardly fair, however, to blame a Viceroy who had only just taken over his duties from a predecessor who had quitted the country complacently describing it as quiet and contented — the wisest man under such circumstances, especially if new to India, would be largely guided by the opinions of his advisers. These probably regarded most of the reports as due to Oriental exaggeration—knowing that Eastern bazaars are always full of rumours. And of course there is commonly a tendency to minimise the gravity of incidents the occurrence of which is to a considerable extent a reflection upon an administrator whose duty it is to have rendered them impossible or improbable. It is not very easy to feel the pulse of India from a peak in the Himalayas, or a

comfortable bungalow in a half-Europeanised city. There can be no question that when the outbreak came, Lord Canning, and those about him who ought to have known better, were caught napping, and were altogether unprepared for the emergency. Yet even before Lord Dalhousie had left the country, the demeanour of the sepoys and the restlessness in the bazaars had been matters of common comment among, not only Indians, but also those Europeans who really knew the East. There was a general belief among the people in a prediction that British rule would last only a hundred years—and Clive had fought Plassy in 1757. "Chupatties" (unleavened cakes) had been sent (probably from Oudh, where the annexation was much resented) to the headman, or chief religious authority, in most villages in north-eastern India. Six "chupatties" were in each case handed over, with instructions to each recipient of one to send on six more with a formula well understood by the conspirators. But the district authorities seem to have taken few steps to investigate the meaning of these mysterious proceedings, or to inquire by whom the "chupatties" were transmitted. It was suspected, and possibly correctly, that the leaders of the seditious movement largely used that great body of wandering religious ascetics known as "faquirs,"

"sadhus," &c., for the latter purpose. Then commanding officers of Indian regiments, though aware of the existence of restlessness and lack of discipline in the Native Army generally, never suspected their own men. Except here and there, all authorities, military and civil, seem to have been living in a fool's paradise. The present writer had a relative, a colonel commanding a native regiment, whose men had escorted him and his indignant officers out of the lines (where they had been sleeping, under orders, to reassure them), and then marched off to Delhi to join the rebel forces there. To his dying day he always declared that his regiment, which everybody else knew was rotten to the core, would never have revolted but for the want of confidence shown in it by the authorities! Everything he owned was of course looted, but his "bearer" managed to bury some small articles of jewellery, and the author wears to-day a gold watch-chain which the faithful old man brought back with other things to his master when peace had been once more restored.

In January 1857 it was reported that a good deal of excitement existed among the sepoys at Dum Dum (near Calcutta) where there was a school of musketry, regarding the issue of greased cartridges; inasmuch as the grease was believed to be composed of the fat of swine and cows, and

the use of the former was opposed to the tenets of the Muhammadan religion, and that of the latter destructive of caste among Hindus. Low-caste employés in the arsenal had taunted the men with their degradation. The matter was made worse by the fact that the greased end of the cartridge had to be *bitten* off—an order which is said to have emanated from the Crown and not from the East India Company. Some of this ammunition was being then sent from England. Indian artillery-men, it should be said, had been using grease for oiling the axles of the carriages and for lubricating parts of the guns, for a long while, and without offering any objection; but of course they only handled it, without putting it to their mouths. However, permission was given to the sepoys to tear off the greased portion instead of biting it off; and the men were allowed, if they preferred, to purchase the lubricating material themselves in the bazaars. No more of the cartridges were ordered from England. These measures had a quieting effect, but the men were by no means fully reassured—suspecting that the paper itself, which burnt differently to ordinary paper, had been made with fatty material in it. It is note-worthy that here, as in other earlier troubles, it was only the infantry which was discontented—the cavalry and artillery, which did not use the

cartridges, remained quiet; though no doubt sympathising with their comrades. It was no light matter to these objecting men. Using such ammunition, they believed, imperilled their future existences, and meant ostracism in their homes and villages.

Close to Dum Dum was the station of Barrackpore, where the 34th Bengal Native Infantry, a notoriously fanatical regiment, was stationed. It soon became evident from the occurrence of incendiary fires and other incidents, that it was much disaffected. General Hearsey had already written strongly to the Government describing the temper of the sepoys and their suspicion of the cartridges at both here and at Dum Dum, and even went so far as to say that the situation was such that they "dwelt on a mine ready for explosion." Presently serious troubles occurred at Berhampore, where the sepoys of the 19th Bengal Native Infantry refused to receive the ammunition, and revolted. Here again the artillery and cavalry did not join the infantry, and indeed were ready to fire on them—which was held to be a proof of the sincerity of the last in the reasons they gave for disobeying orders; for, as said before, only the infantry used the obnoxious cartridges. The 19th was marched to Barrackpore, and disbanded in the presence of a strong

European force. Unlike the 34th, it was a regiment with a good reputation. The men felt the degradation keenly—implored to be drafted into other regiments—and it is said that some of them, later on, fought on our side. They were genuinely fearful of loss of caste, and had been corrupted by the 34th.

The very day before the 19th marched into Barrackpore to be disbanded, a sepoy in the 34th, one Mungul Pandy by name, ran, half mad with Indian hemp, into the lines and attacked the sergeant-major, and then fired and killed the horse of the adjutant who had ridden up to his rescue. The "jemadar," or native non-commissioned officer, and the guard, also attacked these officers, and the latter were only saved by the timely arrival of General Hearsey, who succeeded in saving their lives. Yet, although Mungul Pandy and the "jemadar" were hanged, for between five and six weeks nothing was done to this regiment—which was eventually disbanded. The authorities seem to have regarded these outbreaks as isolated incidents, but a rude awakening was soon to come. The Mutiny at Meerut quickly followed, and was succeeded by risings at Delhi, Cawnpore, Fatehgarh, Lucknow, Bareilly, and elsewhere—with the ghastly details of which all are familiar. It was perfectly obvious

that the disaffection was organised and widespread.

It is customary nowadays in England to regard "this wild fanatic outbreak of 1857," as Sir Alfred Lyall calls it, as a rising of the native military forces almost pure and simple—a systematic attempt by the most powerful class in the land to seize the country for themselves. But this was not the opinion of many knowledgeable men in India at the time. Many factors had been operating to cause general alarm and disaffection, and to pave the way for revolt. The annexation of the Mahratta territories, and, later on, that of Oudh, had caused an almost universal feeling of alarm at the extent of our power; and had moreover driven thousands of masterful men of weight and influence into obscurity, and deprived them of dignity and position. Under the new *régime* their occupations were gone, and they were panting for action and revenge. The religious element was on their side. The new system of collection of revenue was unpopular. The administration was feeble and self-satisfied. The Native Army had become conceited and arrogant; regarded British conquests as mostly due to their efforts, and indeed thought that it held the situation in its hands. They had, moreover, considerable grounds for forming such an impression. The

proportion of Indian to European soldiers was then five to one, instead of two to one as at present. India was very isolated from Europe—there was no railway beyond Allahabad—there were many batteries of native artillery—and discipline had become very lax. With such conditions existing, the prospect of success for those desiring a return to the old order of things was by no means unpromising. Like Nana Sahib and many others, they dissembled, cautiously made their plans, and started on their campaign of sedition.

It is probable that these men felt and knew that an appeal to the soldiery to rise against the officers who had so often led them to victory would, if the incitement had been based upon patriotic and national grounds alone, have ended in failure. An Oudh sepoy had no interest in the restoration of the Peishwa; a Mahratta soldier was not particularly desirous of putting back one of his old foes the Muhammadans, on the thrones of either Delhi or Lucknow; and Muhammadans certainly were not influenced by any wish to restore a Hindu power in the Deccan, though longing for a return to the conditions existing in the time of the old Mogul dynasty. The plotters well knew that the best method of inflaming the minds of the soldiery and the masses was by

suggesting that it was the design of the ruling race to destroy their religion and caste. Such a proceeding, it should be remembered, was no new thing in India—fanatical Muhammadan rulers like Jehangir had forcibly compelled great masses of Hindus to accept the religion of Islam as the price of their lives. The scheme for poisoning men's minds had been silently working for a long while before the explosion occurred—Eldred Pottinger had seen the trouble coming, fourteen years before—and all the people were suspiciously watching for indications of attempts to tamper with their cherished customs and beliefs. A new law had been passed for the general enlistment of soldiers—since the Brahman troops on caste grounds had declined to cross the seas. The stupid issue of the greased cartridges was just what the conspirators wanted. It aroused the anger and confirmed the fears of both Hindus and Muhammadans—and indeed if it *had* been the intention to do what was suspected, no more ingenious method could have been devised than that of ordering the sepoys to put the fat of swine and cattle into their mouths. The thing was careless and foolish enough in itself, but, occurring when it did, it was like dropping a match into a magazine. The rank and file, it must be remembered, were mostly very simple, credulous,

ignorant men, enlisted in the rural tracts, and extremely suspicious of anything they did not understand. The native artilleryman stroked and flattered his gun before he fired it, and when the mutineers seized the railway, they would not go near the engines, but fired volleys of bullets upon them from a distance. The class from which they were drawn is impressionable to an extraordinary degree. The chances are that when Mungul Pandy went to his fate, he conscientiously believed that he was dying for his faith and caste, and his last words were those of a man who considered himself to be a martyr to a righteous cause.

Later on, of course—especially when that large, lawless, and truculent criminal class, which even to-day infests all large cities, had joined the rebels, and the broken jails had disgorged all that was foulest in the country to reinforce them—all sorts of villainous motives operated, and a reign of murder and pillage supervened for which no extenuation is conceivable. All that is claimed is, that in the beginning, the common soldiers as a body probably did genuinely believe that their religion and caste were threatened. They were the catspaws of clever, unscrupulous, and lying conspirators. It is quite possible indeed that some of these last were disturbed at the violence

of the conflagration they had started—knowing full well that what had happened must move even the supinest government and most humane race to retaliation. A cynic has said that the barbarities of the Mutiny were the salvation of British rule in India. So awful were the excesses that it is only at this distance of time that one can venture to offer a word in even partial palliation of them. General Hearsey and other wise men were quite right when they said the authorities were crying peace when there was really no peace. But for the Native Army, it is true, there would have been no general and concerted rising; on the other hand, this would never have risen but for the subtle, indefatigable efforts of a large, and apparently almost unsuspected, body of agitators and conspirators. The Mutiny taught us many important lessons, but none more valuable than this—that the masses of India as a body are so credulous and suspicious that they are always liable to be exploited with success by any hostile agency which knows how to effectively work upon their feelings and fears.

> "A little fire is quickly trodden out,
> Which, being suffered, rivers cannot quench."

It is never safe to trust appearances in India; never safe to lose touch with the masses; and

madness to neglect or ignore the views of the men on the spot, such as the district officers and others. It is little more than half a century ago that the sepoys, drawn from the countryside, were swept off their feet by a wave of unreasonable panic and fanatical excitement as the consequence of the dissemination of false and seditious rumours —can we suppose that in this short time the nature of the people has materially changed?

However, complex and widespread as had been the causes of the Mutiny, when the writer first reached India some twenty years after these occurrences, it was extraordinary how things had settled down. Neither side ever referred to what had so comparatively recently set race against race. The malcontents had mostly perished or disappeared, and the people, Oriental-like, had quietly accepted the position. It must be acknowledged by all that the action of the authorities after the quelling of the rising, was just as wise and reassuring as that previous to those sad happenings had been the reverse. Curiously enough, where the hardest retributive blows had fallen seemed just the places where the best relations existed between the rulers and the ruled. As some explanation of this attitude, it should be remembered that, as Sleeman and others have told us, every village had its tales and traditions

of bygone fights and struggles between the retainers of rival potentates in its vicinity—especially in the areas from which most of the sepoys had been drawn. To some greybeards very possibly, the wave of turmoil and bloodshed which had swept over the land was only a bigger thing than usual, and attended with more conclusive results. All this part of India had always been turbulent, and the construction of the villages pointed to this; for whether these are fortified or not is a very fair indication of the character of their populations. To the north-west, every settlement has its defences—lower down country some are protected and some are not—while, when lower Bengal is entered, nothing of the kind is met with; the unwarlike people of that part apparently despairing of making any effective resistance to an invader. But, as soldiers know, even an unfortified Indian village is a nasty place to carry. It wants a lot of pounding to thoroughly level the thick mud walls; the streets are narrow and crooked; the flat roofs with low parapets are comparatively easily held; and a fairly good house is seldom entered by a door leading directly into the interior, but by a short passage at right angles to it and commanding the entrance.

We had several rajahs in the district—men of real wealth and position, and not the small fry

who so often go by the title to-day, and who are almost as great impostors as the "Indian princes" of London lodging-house keepers. One was an accomplished English student, of good literary tastes and very enlightened views—all of which, however, did not prevent him from handing over his possessions and becoming a religious recluse, when he unexpectedly lost his much-loved eldest son by death. Another, of a different stamp, had made a short trip to England, and had returned with a bewildered brain, a great collection of fancy saddlery and expensive guns, a number of musical boxes, a cuckoo clock, and a set of false teeth of which he was very proud and usually took out to exhibit to a visitor! But most of them were ignorant, genial, and sporting characters, and one (for whom the writer had a considerable liking) was under a cloud at the time in consequence of having abducted a dancing-girl who had rejected his addresses, by holding up by means of a band of his retainers, the troupe to which she was attached. The crime was aggravated by the fact that his followers had been clad, for purposes of disguise, in the national garb of a neighbouring friendly state—a ruse which had nearly led to a serious political difficulty. They were, as a body, however, a pleasant, friendly lot of men, who were

always ready to lend their elephants and join us in sporting trips, and we treated one another—the writer is grateful to a reviewer for the phrase—with the natural consideration which one honest man shows another.

A sporting "sahib" not only gets to know the Indian gentry as a rule far better than the official who clings to his desk, but he is also nearly always a welcome visitor among the farmers and villagers. These are usually glad enough to see the end of a tiger, for, apart from the steady toll the beast levies on their flocks and herds, they are never sure that he will not attack people, and the presence of one in the vicinity of their dwellings is a source of constant anxiety. Then the wild pigs, deer, antelope, &c., when in excessive numbers and not shot at, play the mischief with the crops. The question, however, of the expediency of shooting tigers everywhere, is not so simple as it looks. The villagers catch the pigs in nets and club them to death, and drive the antelope and deer into swampy ground where their feet and legs sink into the soil and enable their pursuers to come up with and destroy them; but still in some localities the cultivators would be in a bad way if it were not for tigers, wolves, hyænas, wild dogs, &c., which prey on the less dangerous but almost equally expensive and

troublesome animals. A purely cattle- and deer-eating tiger usually takes up a steady residence in the vicinity of a group of villages, dividing his attentions among them; and, so long as he keeps to these habits, the people often come to look upon him with a quite kindly toleration, and have some facetious friendly name for him. A village herd of cattle includes many beasts of no value, but which a Hindu, with his respect for the sacred cow, does not like to destroy, and the tiger is welcome to some of these if he keeps the pillaging deer and "nylghai" (*Portax tragocamelus*), &c., off the fields of grain. Views will differ about the matter, but as a general proposition it may be said that it is very seldom wise to disturb the balance of nature without very serious consideration. There are certainly pros and cons in the tiger's account—unless, indeed, he takes to man-eating.

This sketch really ought to include some description of the big-game shooting in the jungles and forests to the north of the district, but, as a matter of fact, at the time of which the author is writing, he had very little leisure for getting away on such expeditions. Not only had the hospital and jail to be seen to, but also all the medico-legal work; and inasmuch as a Civil Surgeon was supposed to be something of

a scientist and to possess a smattering of knowledge as regards natural history, botany, &c., he was often asked to advise upon, and deal with, a good many not strictly professional matters. For instance, wolves were very numerous and rewards were offered for their destruction, and it was one of his duties to certify that the baskets of vicious, snarling little wretches brought in were really wolves' cubs — for the guileless villager was quite capable of palming off young jackals for them when he came in to claim the reward! Moreover, when in later years he shot through these forests in company with his Indian friends, his experiences, even if there were space to relate them, were not sufficiently eventful to make them of much interest to the reader— especially as no form of literature regarding life in India has been already so thoroughly and ably exploited, and, as the writer thinks, so honestly and realistically. One tiger-hunt is generally very like another, though the charm and excitement of the sport amid such delightful surroundings can hardly be exaggerated, and with many men it becomes a veritable passion. Bison (*Gavæus gaurus*) and rhinoceros the writer has never come across, and although he has met wild elephants, he has never shot, even at, one. There were a good many of the last in the jungles referred to,

and a rajah living within a reasonable distance, as India goes, kept up an establishment for catching them. This is a form of sport which the writer always regrets having missed seeing, for he has listened with intense interest to the stories of men who have taken part in it. The wild herd having been located and rounded up by a number of well-trained trackers and beaters, is eventually, with great caution and skill, driven into a palisaded enclosure in the forests known as a "kheddar." This has long wings diverging from the entrance on either side, so as to present a very large opening, gradually contracting until it terminates at the gateway of the actual enclosure itself. When all the animals have gradually been driven through this entrance, a heavy gate is dropped and the herd is captured. The palisading of the "kheddar," though very strong, would nevertheless be easily broken down by the wild elephants but for a deep wide ditch at its foot; and were it not that when any of them attempt to force their way out, they are driven back by blank charges fired, and torches dashed in their faces, by the swarm of beaters, &c., stationed all round the outside of the structure.

After a day or two, tame elephants, with their "mahouts" (or drivers) and "noosers" on their

backs, enter the enclosure. Some of the wild "tuskers" may show fight, but are well pummelled by trained fighting elephants. These latter are magnificent beasts, selected for their size and courage. But as a rule there is not much trouble. It is a very curious thing that the wild elephants seldom attempt to pull these "mahouts" and "noosers" off their mounts, and they seem, indeed, to take very little notice of them. The current idea that the tame animals fondle and cajole the captured ones appears to be a mistake—they, acting on their drivers' instructions, jostle and edge out of the crowd the one to be subdued, and while they range up on either side of him the "noosers" slip down and hobble the victim with stout ropes round both hind legs. This must indeed be a plucky thing to do amid a lot of enormous enraged creatures, but the men are active and skilful and very few accidents occur. In about a week or ten days, probably all the beasts are secured, and are then led out of the enclosure and picketed apart in the forest. Here they soon come to know their new masters the "mahouts," who feed and sing songs to them, and presently they settle down to their new position and give no further trouble.

All this sounds simple enough, but a successful enterprise of the kind is always attended with

Washing elephants.

many exciting incidents, and demands a very great deal of organisation, skill and courage on the part of the director of the operations and his men. Mr G. P. Sanderson, who probably had as much experience of wild elephants and their capture as any one in India, considers that, contrary to general opinion, these animals are rather stupid, though amiable and tractable, beasts. Sometimes, of course, adult trained males go "must"—a condition supposed to be of a sexual nature—and then are very dangerous. The approach of the paroxysm is fortunately indicated by the flow of an oily secretion from a hole in the temple, and upon this being observed the animal is at once strongly secured—but sometimes there is carelessness about this, and bad accidents happen. Some gruesome remains of what had been a man, were once brought in to the present writer. They were those of a "mahout" who had been seized by a "must" elephant, which had put its foot on the poor wretch's chest and pulled off all his limbs with its trunk. An officer went out to shoot it and found it tethered to a tree, but it looked so quiet and harmless that, yielding to the owner's request, he left it and returned to his camp. Next day, however, it had a fresh attack, seized the unfortunate owner and treated him just as it had the "mahout"—

tore itself free from its ropes and chains, bolted into the jungles, and was never seen again!

It is a very curious fact that the skeleton of a wild elephant is hardly ever found — and indeed it is quite unusual to come across tusks or any of the bones. The writer remembers seeing the thigh-bone of one in the bed of a nearly dry watercourse at the foot of the hills, but as he was beating up a tiger at the time he could not get down to examine it or ascertain if any other bones were near. The remains of other wild beasts, such as bison, deer, &c., are also seldom met with; though, of course, shed antlers of deer (antelope do not drop their horns) are frequently picked up. No altogether satisfactory explanation of these facts has been discovered. Wolves, hyænas, jackals, &c., would demolish and devour most of the flesh of the defunct animal; and as many of such scavengers probably, like the dog, bury bones or hide them in some very inaccessible spot until they require them, perhaps this may partially account for their being so seldom seen—but the suggestion is only thrown out in the absence of any other more satisfactory solution of the mystery. The jungle tribes think elephants all retire to some remote and secluded valley to die.

But this rambling chapter must come to a close.

All young officers in India should be prepared to change their appointments pretty frequently, and to take their marching orders at a few days' notice. This is right enough, for a change of work and scene is absolutely essential for the proper training of the official recruit. It is just as necessary to run him about during the first few years of his service, as it is to keep him for some time in one place when he really knows his work and is senior and competent enough to have charge of a district or a local departmental command. So one day the orders came; the bullock carts containing the impedimenta rolled groaning away; the horses marched off in charge of the grooms; the palanquin stood ready in front of the empty house—a start was made, and presently the little settlement faded away in the distance.

. . . . . .

Something like twenty years elapsed between the time of the writer's quitting Surajpore and that of his passing through it again. Many changes had occurred in the interval. The railway had come, and with it a good deal that was desirable—such as ice, good bread, and a newspaper which was less than forty-eight hours old—and also a good deal which was not so pleasing. Strange faces and stranger manners were en-

countered on every side. It was a joy, however, to meet old Chintoo, the "shikari," once again—though, of course, he had brought another son along with him to be provided for somehow! He had never been an optimistic man, but now his views were gloomy in the extreme. Food prices had risen—"sahibs" were always coming and going—game was getting scarce—and he had been recently shot in the leg by a white traveller of distinction who had unfortunately mistaken him in a drive for the tiger! And the writer himself felt very depressed. The place was haunted by memories of good old friends—companions in many a cheery gathering or exciting incident by flood and field—who had either gone to a better land, or were trying to pass time in the dull respectability of a suburban villa in England. But a week later, when he was once again sitting over a cheerful log-fire in front of his much-loved tents in the forests—the dogs sitting round staring at the blaze; camels bubbling; elephants occasionally squeaking with pleasure through their trunks; the men chatting and laughing as they cooked their food in little mud-ovens on the ground; the old headman present airing his grievances and relapsing at intervals into stories of sporting "sahibs," "budmash" (wicked) tigers, and the doings of his dead and gone

relatives—the gloom fell off him like a garment, and it was pleasantly borne in upon him that, despite "unrest," plague, famine, and other amenities of modern Anglo-Indian life, the good old days had not yet entirely passed away!

THE LALPAHAR WELL.

WHEN the official on duty, or the seeker after sport, quits the fertile alluvial plain known as the Doab, the land lying between the Ganges and Jumna, and presently, crossing the latter river, moves south until he strikes the outlying spurs of that great backbone stretched across India and known at this point as the Vindhya mountains, he traverses a tract of country which is quite dissimilar to any lying to the north, and differs, moreover, from that found on the extensive raised plateau of the Deccan or in the peninsula to the south. This area, known as Bundelkund, presents slight attractions to the agriculturist, a few to the geologist and archæologist, a good many to the naturalist and sportsman—and constitutes, from the character of its climate and soil and its tendency to suffer from famine, a great source of anxiety to the revenue official and the Government. A certain number of localities within it, usually in the vicinity of rivers, are

fertile enough, and yield good crops when the rainfall is adequate; but much of the country is given over to the growing of cotton—a bushy plant about four feet high with deeply indented leaves and yellow flowers, which particularly flourishes with a rainfall so slight as to be quite insufficient for the satisfactory growing of cereals and food-stuffs generally. Apart from the fibre adhering to the seeds in the pods or boles, it yields a considerable quantity of oil — which, however, is not much used by the people.

The usual soils in Bundelkund are mostly derived from disintegrated laterite. "Mar" is a rich, black, friable earth which holds an enormous quantity of water, and upon which a certain amount of wheat is grown if it is not too dry and hard as the result of drought—or, on the other hand, is not too wet to furnish a suitable seed bed. "Kabar," another soil, is still more difficult to cultivate and work — drying very quickly into hard blocks and forming great cracks in the ground, or becoming so sticky in the rainy season that heavy animals and men can hardly walk over it without slipping or becoming bogged in the soft coherent mass. "Parwa," a reddish or yellowish loam, is better, and can be successfully irrigated if necessary. And, of course, there are spots—more or less like

oases—where the soil is not only easy to work, but is also rich and fertile. Scattered about the face of the land, immense plains, where large herds of antelope wander and the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) is occasionally seen, are frequently met with—dry and almost sterile, littered with small stones and debris at some time washed down from the crumbling rocks of the Central Indian mountains, and lying on the top of the sandstone formation of immense antiquity beneath. They grow little but spear-grass—so prevalent here that you may at once recognise the resident of these parts by the great leather shield rising on his shoes above the instep, which is necessary to protect his feet from the sharp penetrating needles of this objectionable growth. As a consequence of the rapid exhaustion of the small available plant-food in the soil of most of the country, large areas are bare-fallowed every two or three years; and the cultivator's efforts are also largely impeded by the encroachments of pestilent weeds—especially the one known as "kans" grass, which the peasant does not pretend to destroy, but merely leaves to die out of itself after a period of from ten to twenty years. The climate is extremely hot and somewhat malarious. Altogether, as said, it is an unpromising land as a whole for agricultural operations, and is, moreover,

one in which the rainfall is very uncertain, and where the supply of water available for irrigation purposes is only from the rain-fed catchment area in the comparatively low mountains of Central India, instead of from the reliable snow and glacier-fed sources in the mighty Himalayas as is the case farther north. There are some canals, but wells are few in number and so deep as to make the cost of lifting the water in them almost prohibitive.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that Bundelkund, despite all these disadvantages, is devoid of charm. Indeed, some of the scenery is extremely picturesque, and the people are decidedly interesting. Though indifferently, the soil is capable generally of growing the cereal and millet crops of Upper India, and normally presents at least an appearance of fertility. In many parts there are fine groves of the beautiful and shady "mohwa" (*Bassia latifolia*) whose flowers furnish a considerable source of food and yield material for manufacturing country spirit, and other useful trees; and even on the more arid tracts, the "babool" (*Acacia arabica*), with its lightly-foliaged thorny branches and little golden balls of fragrant flowerets, does a good deal to relieve the aspect of the land from dreariness. The country is fairly well provided with rivers, bright

and clear, except in the rainy season, from running over stony and sandy beds; and with large barren tangles of ravines extending on both sides of them. Where the more fertile soils are found and water is near, the vegetation, if not luxuriant, is at least satisfying to the eye; and away to the south, where the hills rise, often very abruptly, from the level plain, these are well, though not heavily, wooded, and the home of the tiger, leopard, bear, and other large denizens of the jungles. The plains themselves are studded with little isolated eminences, composed mostly of large heaped-up boulders—"outcrops," as the geologist would say, and much resembling the "kopjes" of South Africa—while here and there are half-natural, half-artificial lakes of some miles in circumference and of marvellous beauty; great reservoirs of water for irrigation purposes, mostly the work of the enlightened Chandel dynasty in the past. Some of these have little islets in them, upon which are situated exquisitely ornamented temples, now, alas! mostly in ruins, as the result of iconoclastic and fanatical vandalism, and thought to be of Jain origin—that religion of which the sacred symbol was (as also of Buddhism) the "swastika" or "fylfot"; just now such a favourite form of ornament for brooches, &c., in England.

But what attracts the admiration of the traveller most of all perhaps, are the frowning castles with their walls and battlements built of solid stone, which so often crown the summits of the isolated hills and elevations rising out of the plains. Most of them are of considerable antiquity, the strongholds of bold, determined caterans in days gone by, and call up mental pictures of baronial halls and fortresses in Europe in mediæval times. Nearly all these have histories of sieges and fierce fights, of inter-tribal strife, or strenuous resistance against Muhammadan aggressors — when not infrequently, like the Rani of Jhansi in the Mutiny, women took the field at the head of their troops and fought with all the ardour and courage of men. Legends cluster round their ancient walls and sites, and in the villages there still linger thrilling tales of the loves, wars and intrigues of the long dead and gone chieftains who ruled in them. Under the village council-tree are still discussed the bravery of Jaya Chandra and the Banaphar heroes Alha and Udal—and of other patriots fighting for their rugged homes against the cruel invaders from Delhi and the north. The annals of no people can point to warfare of greater determination and ferocity. A glamour hangs over the country, deepening as one wanders farther south towards that land

of ancient fable and romance, Rajputana. It is essentially a piece of old India, where the comparatively cultured and commercial characteristics of the prosperous population of the Doab, are gradually replaced by the bolder, more rugged, and perhaps more attractive ones of the inhabitants of the wilder country to the south and west.

Nearly all these little isolated stony hills and elevations, whether surmounted by a fortress or not, have little and very dirty villages nestling at their feet. They commonly consist of twenty or thirty ill-constructed dwellings, almost primitive in character, and surrounded by thorny hedges to keep off prowling leopards and hyænas from preying on the cattle, dogs, &c., belonging to the inhabitants. The sides of the hill itself will usually be sprinkled with small ill-grown trees with their roots embedded among the stones, creepers, cacti, bushes, &c.; and with a little shrine erected somewhere on the slope. The population of the country (a comparatively sparse one as India goes) includes a certain number of Thakoors—residents of good caste who constitute the landed gentry, and who are, as a rule, fine, well-set-up men, good sportsmen, very indifferently educated, and very prone to "taking to the jungles," or defying the authorities when

they consider themselves to be the victims of any injustice. The mass of the people, however, is ignorant, somewhat slothful and timid, and probably largely Dravidian in origin; many almost typical descendants of this stock still existing in the wilder and more isolated tracts, living much as their forefathers did hundreds of years ago, and holding very much the same religion and ideas. These survivals mostly earn a scanty living as hunters and trackers, woodcutters, forest guards, labourers, &c., or sometimes by less creditable occupations. But the majority of the people are small tradesmen, caste workmen, and cultivators of the soil. The last are of a more migratory nature than the ryot usually is in other parts of India—a fact partially due to the frequent occurrence of scarcity and the consequent necessity of seeking work elsewhere, and also to the small remuneration obtainable for his labour rendering the field-worker very indifferent as to retaining his small holding or his particular employment. The average villager, in short, is extremely ignorant, rather lazy, and very poor.

Such was, roughly speaking, the condition of Bundelkund and its inhabitants at the time of which the author writes — not so many years ago, but before the extension of the railway had opened up the country,—and it was when camp-

ing near one such village as described, that he heard the gist of the story which follows.

Lalpahar was a partially isolated rocky eminence, starting up almost perpendicularly on three sides from the level plain, and with a ramp gradually rising from this last to where once had apparently been a gateway; while on the fourth side it was connected by a neck of land, of somewhat lower elevation than the hill itself, with a chain of quite lofty mountains, an outlying portion of the Vindhyan range. Upon its summit were the ruins of an ancient fort, the crumbling battlements of which followed the line of cliffs which descended to the level ground below, and extended across the neck of land which connected the hill with the heights behind. The top was a flat, almost circular, plateau of about three or four hundred yards across, and still bore traces of where the foundations, cement floors, and walls of buildings, had formerly existed. A few fine and very old trees still grew here, and beneath one of these was situated what is known as a "baoli"—a very deep well, of which the masonry cylinder, some thirty feet in diameter, and also the rock outside it, were honeycombed, so to speak, with little alcoves or chambers, to which access was obtainable from above by a flight of stone steps winding round the interior

of the reservoir. Such structures are not uncommon in some parts of India, and are used not only for the storage of water, but also, by the richer classes, as cool retreats from the pitiless fierceness of an eastern sun. This particular one, though evidently originally constructed very strongly, was now however very much ruined; and, being reputed to be the haunt of evil spirits, was rarely visited. The cliffs upon which the decayed fortress stood were bare of vegetation save for creepers and various kinds of small bushes; but the mountains behind the neck of land referred to were well wooded, and abounded with game large and small. At the foot of the hill was a small village inhabited by woodcutters, "shikaris" or professional hunters, small cultivators, &c.—the residents of which in former times no doubt were in the habit of retreating to the stronghold above in the event of any alarm. The position was still one of considerable strength, and must, in days before the invention of gunpowder and arms of precision, have been wellnigh impregnable. Why it had been abandoned and allowed to fall into decay was unknown—there was no tradition of its siege and capture. Maybe it had been given up from some such religious motive as was Fatehpore-Sikri, near Agra. But the most probable reason was suggested by the rents and fissures

in, and the generally unstable appearance of, the face of the elevation itself—giving the impression that at some former time the locality had suffered from the shock of an earthquake or some such convulsion of nature, which had rendered the walls and battlements at the summit shaky and insecure. It was an impressive and very picturesque spot, and its beauty was enhanced by the low trees and jungle which had sprung up at the base of the cliffs—spreading out like an apron for a considerable distance into the smiling plain extending to the horizon.

In the little village referred to, at the foot of this fortified hill, lived a woodcutter and charcoal-burner—one Puttoo by name. As a consequence of the combined influences of his calling, his strain of aboriginal blood, and his paucity of education, he was of a taciturn and uncommunicative nature; versed in forest lore, saturated with superstition, and absolutely unconcerned with anything outside his own immediate environment and requirements. Among the last, however, was money—for Puttoo was very very poor. He took his wood, charcoal, silk cocoons, lac, catechu, gums, and other jungle produce, on his bullock or on his own back, to the nearest market some twenty miles away, and lived by the sale of these and the scanty yield of the two or three small fields he owned. He was

married to a woman considerably younger than himself, equally unintellectual, but useful, nevertheless, as an assistant in his agricultural work and as a helpmate generally. The sanitary condition of these villages is almost invariably very bad; the inhabitants stacking all the refuse on the stony ground above and behind their dwellings, with the consequence that the drainage from these collections is pretty sure to flow into the hovels of the inhabitants when the heavy rain falls in the monsoon. Such a disease as cholera naturally finds a very suitable field for its dissemination and devastations in such localities, and at its last visitation the woodcutter's two eldest sons and a daughter had been swept away. His sole remaining child was a little lad some twelve years of age, and commonly referred to as Kumli—selected as the name of an obnoxious caterpillar which raises red and painful wheals on the skin, and consequently a sufficiently repulsive and particularly appropriate designation for a cherished child from whom it was desired to ward off the influence of the Evil Eye. Kumli's tender age prevented him from being of much assistance to his father in the woods or fields; but in India all children very soon help to faintly swell the family exchequer, and the little lad was sent off early each morning,

armed with a bamboo pole much longer than himself, to drive the goats and the few cattle of the residents into the jungles at the foot of the hill to feed, to watch them grazing during the day, and to escort them home in the evening. It was surprising how the animals obeyed the little imp's orders, and how readily his shrill commands were obeyed. He knew his charges all by name, and the nature of each, and kept up excellent discipline. If a buffalo or cow gave extra trouble he would inform his father; and next morning the recalcitrant beast would go forth with a heavy piece of wood (the leg of a native bedstead was a very suitable and efficient article for the purpose) loosely dangling by a piece of rope from its neck, so that at each step it banged against the knees of the animal to its considerable discomfort. He passed the day very much like one of his herd—wandering about observing anything curious or unusual, such as the appearance of a stick insect, the interested movements of vultures and kites, the dancing before his harem of an amorous peacock, &c., dozed and slept, ate the frugal meal he had brought with him, and foraged among the bushes and smaller trees for edible fruits and berries. He would have been surprised if you had told him there was anything monotonous about his

occupation—he lived a little wild happy life of his own, alone with Nature.

One day, lying on his unencumbered rotund stomach in the long grass at the foot of the cliff, he was watching the games and antics of a group of brown monkeys. The gambols, originating in play, presently degenerated into a quarrel, and, with much screeching and noise, one grizzled old male speedily cleared the arena, and gave chase to a frightened youngster of his own sex. They dashed past the boy into a thick bush growing against the rock — and did not come out again. This puzzled Kumli, and presently, wriggling along the ground like a snake, he made his way under the prickly bush to see where they had gone. To his surprise he found a cleft like a small cave in front of him, into which the monkeys had evidently rushed. He knew well enough that this was just the sort of place in which to find a leopard at home, but he knew also that if it had been so occupied the monkeys would never have entered it; so after a little while he ventured a short distance into the passage. He had, however, no light nor means of obtaining one, he was terribly afraid of evil spirits, and he very soon turned round and came out again on his hands and knees. But in crawling, his fingers had en-

countered a small object which did not feel like a stone, and this he brought out with him, and, on regaining his old position, sat down and examined. It was flat, heavy, yellow, and about three-quarters of an inch square. He wrapped it up in his meagre loin-cloth, and took it home with him when he returned at dusk.

After the evening meal he showed it to his father, giving a short description of how he had found it. Puttoo's acquaintance with the current coin of the realm was restricted, but he remembered that his wife's cousin had once, when ploughing, unearthed a somewhat similar object, and had, acting on his advice, sold it in the bazaar of the nearest town for three rupees; subsequently discovering, to his chagrin, that it was worth twenty — a circumstance which had led to a temporary estrangement between the relatives. It was indeed a gold mohur—a coin of one of the old native states. He however made no comment, but, appropriating the find, smoked his country pipe for an hour or so, and, before lying down to sleep, told his son casually that he should very likely be going the same way as he did next morning.

They did not start until somewhat later than usual — not indeed until all the villagers had proceeded to their various occupations—so that

they reached the scene of the discovery without any one noticing their movements. The wood-cutter would have liked to have hung a few rags on the bush at the entrance to the cave as an offering to any godlet residing in the locality, but he did not desire to draw attention to the place, and trusted his negligence might be undetected — for these dryads and minor sylvan deities, though very spiteful, are not apparently particularly intelligent. The spot was a very secluded one, and the vegetation so thick that the little open glades in which the animals grazed during the day were very difficult of access and seldom visited; so that, as a matter of fact, the risk of interruption was very slight. Father and son crawled under the bush unseen, and, after proceeding a little way into the cleft, found they could nearly stand upright. Puttoo lit a torch of pinewood bound at the end with rags soaked in oil, and presently, after proceeding some thirty yards or so, they perceived a faint gleam of daylight in front of them. Working their way slowly towards this, warding off the numerous bats which infested the passage, they at length reached a large hole through which the light was straggling. Through this they wriggled, and found themselves in a small chamber, open in front, and looking down upon

a collection of dark stagnant water beneath them. They recognised at once that they had penetrated into one of the alcoves or recesses in the interior of the great well or "baoli" of the fort, in which the residents in old times had been accustomed to spend the hottest time of the day. The staircase leading to this from above had long since almost entirely crumbled away, and the chamber, some ten feet square, was now quite inaccessible from this direction. The walls had evidently at some former period been coated with enamelled and painted stucco; but most of this had disappeared, and Puttoo, examining the apartment by the light of his torch, presently discovered that this covering, in falling, had disclosed a niche in the wall in which was deposited a small wooden box, now rotten with age, from which a stream of gold mohurs had poured out upon the floor below. It was doubtless from this heap that the monkeys had carried off, out of curiosity, the coin which Kumli had found. Probably in old days the chamber had been reserved for the convenience of the ruler of the fort and his wives, and had, on account of its privacy, been selected for the concealment of a little hoard which, for some reason now impossible to determine, had never been disturbed.

The woodcutter emptied out the remainder of the coins, about a hundred and fifty in number, from the crumbling box, scraped them into a heap together, and sat down to cogitate. He was not exercised by any reflections as to the morality or legality of appropriating them—the difficulty was what to do with them. He had not that confidence in the integrity of the police which prevails in Western countries, and he failed to call to mind any sufficiently plausible story to explain any sudden accession of wealth to his neighbours. But, after a little thought, he retreated to the passage he had traversed, scooped out a sufficiently deep hole in its floor, filled it with his treasure, and, after securing a few coins in his waist-cloth, covered the excavation with earth and restored it carefully to its original appearance. He did not anticipate the discovery by any one of his find, but he wished to protect it from further depredations by the "bunder-log" or "monkey people"—his intention being to draw upon it for his own purposes as occasion required. He solemnly bound over his son to keep the secret, and, returning cautiously to his home, thrashed him ostentatiously before his wife for taking him on a fool's errand. Little Kumli, whose moral upbringing had been defective, fully understood the stratagem and howled contritely.

Puttoo, though primarily a woodcutter, was a man of varied and unusual occupations, and he was assisted in his labours by a caste-fellow locally known as Chua (the rat). The two men were very much alike in taste and disposition, and about the same age. Both were short, wiry, taciturn, and exceedingly unsatisfactory as sources of information—wearing on their uncouth faces an expression which might be termed inscrutable or vacant, as the fancy of the observer might decide. They wore extremely dirty wisps of rags, below which a little grizzly hair straggled, bound round their heads to represent "puggris"; their bodies were clothed in cotton tunics, fastened by tape over the chest and by a roll of dingy white cloth round the waist—while nondescript articles of raiment, baggy at the top and falling in folds down the thighs, constituted their nether garments. All their wardrobe was of a sombre greenish colour, which corresponded very well with the prevailing hue of the jungles in which they mostly lived. Shoes indeed they possessed for use when they went to the market town or traversed a plain covered with spear-grass, but these they discarded in the woods, and usually carried hung on the end of a bamboo pole when by any accident they used a highway. Apart from the woodcutting, they were also charcoal-burners; collected the cocoons of the

"tusser" moth; scraped off the lac[1] insects embedded in a resinous secretion on the twigs of trees; robbed the wild bees of their honey; extracted catechu from the acacia; ran an illicit still for concocting country spirit from the flowers of the "mohwa" tree; set snares very skilfully for small animals and birds; assisted a rare "sahib" on a sporting expedition; joined an occasional raid across the border into a Native State, &c. They knew every path in the woods and the habits of the creatures which inhabited them. Neither had guns nor licenses to shoot, but both were arrant poachers and experienced in every detail of woodcraft. Their lonely lives in the silent glades surrounded by the great trees faintly lit up by the glow from their secluded still, and their long nights spent watching and maintaining the fire in the mud-covered heap of wood being slowly converted into charcoal, afforded ample opportunities for securing the small game upon which, together with edible roots and berries, they largely subsisted. Chua was unmarried, or rather had lost his wife, and rarely occupied his hut in the village until driven

[1] The body of the lac insect (*Coccus láccæ*) yields the lac, or lake, dye. Formerly the resinous secretion in which the insect is embedded was thrown away, but now, with the advance of electrical invention, has a good market as an insulating material.

into it by the rains — preferring the shelter of some forest king, or a cave in the hills, to any other residence. They were partially reclaimed Kols—members of an aboriginal tribe still found in considerable numbers in this part of India. Half wild, totally uneducated, worshipping the sylvan shades and godlets (mostly malicious), poor and despised yet not repining at their lot, they would have been the despair of the philanthropist or reformer. Between them there existed rather a companionship than a friendship. Neither respected nor trusted the other—a fact, however, which in no way disturbed their amicable relations.

Such being the position, Puttoo saw no necessity to confide in his confrère regarding his find, and after some anxious thought determined, as was said, to leave his hoard where it was, to take out and melt down a few coins at a time, and to dispose of the nuggets to "sonars," or goldsmiths, in the market town. This he accordingly did, and, as the result of a visit to certain of these not always particularly scrupulous tradesmen, succeeded in disposing of some of his lumps of metal in small quantities at a very fair price. Upon his return with a plausible tale of having unexpectedly inherited some money from a distant relation, he purchased a span of ploughing oxen, got comfort-

ably drunk, and buried the balance of the rupees left after his purchases, under the floor of his hut.

Now Chua, unblest with the intelligence which is a characteristic of the higher, possessed a useful quantity of the cunning which pertains to the lower, nature, and had noticed with some interest his colleague's purchase of the oxen, and also certain other small extravagances he had recently indulged in. He presumed that he had mortgaged his land to the "bunneah," or grain merchant, in the village; but when the woodcutter, a month or two later and after another short absence, purchased a new field, his curiosity was excited as to from whence the money came. Puttoo, it is true, had given him, with considerable detail, the explanation he had briefly given to the villagers; but this mark of confidence had only confirmed him in the supposition that his colleague was largely departing from the truth, and that there was some local source of income — not necessarily sanctioned by the law—upon which he was drawing. So, when a little later the woodcutter was confined to his hut with a severe attack of sickness and had requested him in consequence to keep a particularly careful watch on the operations in the woods, he reassured his partner on the subject, and straightway lay in wait concealed near his hut. He saw his companion and his son come

forth—silently tracked them to the cave—and took an early opportunity of exploring both the passage and the chamber with which it was connected. The consequence of this was that when the woodman (very observant of small unconsidered details) next went to the spot, he was disturbed by the impression that it was not quite as it had been when he had last visited it. His hoard was undisturbed, but with his skilled eyes he fancied he saw signs of the floor having been probed and examined here and there; and there was a small red spot on the wall near the entrance such as would have been caused by a person coughing or spitting when chewing betel-nut, which he was pretty certain he had not made himself. He was not quite sure whether his suspicions were correct, but to ascertain whether the cave was being visited or not, he spread a thin layer of sand on the hard floor of the passage, upon which the print of a foot or hand would be readily seen. He had no suspicion of Chua—opining that the intruder, if there were one, would be a curious villager who had observed his movements and followed him. The stratagem, however, had no result, for the sand when he next visited the spot alone, bore no impression whatever—yet nevertheless he was quite certain this time that the ground had been explored in two or

three fresh places, and that these had been covered up again very carefully. While, squatting on the floor of the chamber, he was speculating in some perplexity about this, he heard a slight noise somewhere in the "baoli" above, and saw a long object like a snake fall past the opening in front of him. Looking cautiously out and up, he perceived a man descending the interior of the well by means of a rope suspended from above—assisted by the few remains of the ruined staircase which had formerly led down to the alcove in which he was concealed. He was himself unarmed, and he quickly discerned that the intruder had a long knife stuck in his waist-cloth. Puttoo was no hero and was taken by surprise—he saw nothing for it but to quietly beat a retreat down the passage; which he accordingly did. Who the man was he did not know. He could not see his face, and his body was stripped to his loin-cloth.

The woodcutter's anxiety and alarm about the incident were very great. Clearly some one knew, or suspected, the existence of his treasure. Early next morning, arming himself with his axe and a knife, he ascended by a circuitous route to the old fort, and, after cautiously ascertaining that the coast was clear, inspected the ground round the mouth of the "baoli." A good-sized "peepul" tree overhung it, and the forester's eye soon

detected where a rope had been fastened round the trunk and had slightly worn away the bark. There was no such article to be seen, but it was evident from the marks that it had been a thick and heavy one and not easy to carry, and he concluded that whoever had used it had probably secreted it somewhere in the neighbourhood. In this he was correct, for, after some searching in the vicinity, he presently, aided by his skill in tracking footsteps, discovered it concealed and covered up in a thick clump of bamboos. He paused and thought for a few minutes, and then a satisfied smile stole over his usually impassive face. Taking the coil to the tree and examining both ends to see which bore traces of having been knotted, he tied the one which had been so treated, round the peepul, and very carefully and deliberately cut through several strands of the rope a little below where the knot had been situated. He then carefully covered up the site of the incisions with mud, untied and replaced the coil where he had found it, and, having restored its hiding-place to its original condition, returned with some degree of relief to his dwelling. His charitable hope was, that with fair luck, any one who used this method of descent again would break the rope and be precipitated to certain death at the bottom of the "baoli."

Chua and he worked pleasantly and amicably together for several days, confining their limited conversations to details of their usual occupations. He had not revisited the chamber,—anxious as he was to do so,—being uncertain as to the character and number of his unwelcome visitor or visitors; but he could not long restrain his impatience, and early one morning set out again alone to inspect the locality,—leaving the simple Chua abstractedly smoking his country pipe and watching the burning charcoal in the forest glade. He cautiously climbed up the old causeway into the fort, and duly reached the "baoli" again. His eyes glistened with satisfaction. Round the base of the tree was a short piece of rope which had parted and broken where he had cut it, and whoever had used it had clearly fallen into the well. But, peering down, to his disappointment he could see nothing floating in the dark water below. He unloosed and threw the fragment of broken rope into the water, and, retracing his steps, after a short journey reached the entrance to the cave. The sand was still undisturbed in the passage, and with a cheerful and relieved mind he pulled out his heavy knife and dug down to his treasure. But it was all gone—the hole was perfectly empty!

Puttoo remained for some time incapable of

action, and then arose and, reaching the alcove, looked down again with a faint hope at the surface of the water in the well—clearly visible from where he now was, but quite smooth and untenanted. After a little while he sadly wended his way home. He conjectured that the robber must have looted his whole hoard at the visit which he had seen him making—but had returned once more to make further explorations in case he had not discovered it all. It was a crushing blow, but he derived some slight consolation from the thought of how probably the avaricious explorer, at his second visit, had met his unexpected and sudden doom.

It is unpleasant to reflect upon the position of a man slowly drowning in a deep dark well with no hope of rescue, and it is satisfactory therefore to be able to record that Chua was never, as a matter of fact, subjected to any such experience. He had, on his next visit to the cave, easily detected, as a woodman, the expedient to discover his footsteps, and had consequently smoothed down all traces of his progress on the sand as he crawled backwards from the chamber into the open. But this had been a long and tedious operation in the dark, and the descent from above was easier and simpler. His first visit by this route had been fruitless, and his digging

operations as barren of result as when he had used the passage. The skill in tracking which had assisted the woodcutter in finding the rope, had served his companion equally well when the latter came to use it a second time a few days later—for Puttoo's footsteps, which he had thought it unnecessary to disguise from a villager, were like large print to Chua's trained eyes. The knowledge that some one had found his rope was sufficient to lead him to examine it, and to speedily discover the cut strands. He had merely torn off the half-severed portion and fastened it to the tree, and then descended with the aid of the sound remainder. On this occasion he had at last come upon poor Puttoo's source of affluence and carried it off. He was never seen again.

The dejected woodcutter did not fail to speculate upon the contemporaneous disappearances of his colleague and his wealth, and, as time wore on and no body rose to the surface of the water in the well, began to suffer from painful doubts as to whether after all his stratagem had been successful, or Chua quite so innocent as he had supposed. He carefully dug up the floor of the hut which his erstwhile companion had fitfully occupied, but, needless to say, the operation led to no discovery. For obvious reasons he did not seek to enlist the sympathy of either the authorities or the villagers

in his affliction, but consoled himself with the reflection that it was the will of the gods, and that, anyhow, he was better off by two oxen and a field than he had been before he explored the "baoli" at Lalpahar.

How the villagers came to know the story is uncertain. Perhaps Kumli, who, grown to man's estate, was accustomed to speak very harshly of the absent Chua, may have learnt it from his father (accustomed to sample the "brew" in the lonely still), and had divulged the particulars to some one. He was, of course, married.

A DIFFICULT POSITION.

TOWARDS the end of 1891—that is, some twenty-three years ago—it became known to the Government that a great religious fair would be held at the sacred centre of pilgrimage Hardwar, in the following March. The expression "became known" is used advisedly, because no formal intimation of any such gathering was given—the district officers heard of it casually in conversations with Indian gentlemen, and informed the authorities. It was an unexpected matter. There are certain approximately determined dates upon which, at fixed places, bathing fairs are regularly held every year, and at certain known and recognised intervals these should if possible be attended by all good Hindus. Such, for instance, are the Kumbh and 'Adh-Kumbh festivals at Hardwar: held at intervals of twelve and six years respectively. But now and again there occur special and very important occasions when attendance is required as peculiarly beneficial for the soul's welfare and the washing away of sin.

They are commonly determined by certain conjunctions of planets, or by the anticipated appearance of some impressive solar or lunar phenomenon, such as an eclipse. Where, how, and by whom, the dates for such auspicious gatherings are discovered and fixed, is not always easy to discern—most probably, as regards North-West India, by Brahman "pundits" or learned priests, astrologers, and sages, at such a place as holy Kashi or Benares.

At all events, by the end of 1891, it was generally known to the population of Upper India and Rajputana that the festival in honour of the water-god Baurn would be held at Hardwar on the 26th of March 1892. The fixing of this date, it appeared, depended upon a certain conjunction of planets; though this by itself was not sufficient, for the "Soobyug" or "propitious period" had also to be secured—and this was the case on the day referred to. It was clearly a momentous event. Twenty-seven years had elapsed since these happy conditions had existed; when the last Mahabarni (or Mahavaruni) fair had been held, and an immense concourse of worshippers had assembled. Apparently on that occasion the authorities had been completely taken by surprise, very little preparation had been made, but (the fact was not forgotten on the present occasion) the

festival had passed off without any untoward incidents. With the Mahabarni, it appeared, would be associated the less important "méla," or festival, of the Somwati on the 24th.

Hardwar, the scene of the proposed gathering, has been described elsewhere.[1] It is not only one of the most picturesque spots in India, but is also regarded by all Hindus as possessing a peculiar sanctity; for here it is that the sacred Gunga, or Ganges, leaves its source and home in the great Himalayan range and takes its sin-cleansing course through the great level densely populated plains of Northern India, until it reaches and loses itself in the Bay of Bengal. Associated particularly with the worship of Vishnu, its solemn peaceful beauty admirably accords with the Hindu conception of the Preserver. The town is small, and consists mostly of shrines, the residences of great Indian chiefs, and the imposing rest-houses for the housing and comfort of pilgrims—mostly built along the bank of the broad, rapid, and sacred stream sparkling in the sun. The holy pool known as the Har-ki-pairi, in which all devotees must bathe, is a sort of little bay scooped out of the bank of the river by the action of the water, and is situated about half-way along the front of the town. At the period of the events

[1] The Silent India.

now described, there generally existed, it is true, a feeble current running through this pool, but the extensive and costly training works designed to ensure steady and effective flushing of the same had not then been constructed, and it was always a matter of anxious consideration to the authorities, on the occasions of these great fairs, as to whether a rise in the level of the water in the river would permit a sufficiently rapid and strong current to pass through the bathing place and keep its contents pure and sweet—or whether a low level might not reduce it to the condition of an almost stagnant and polluted pond. For it is to be remembered that to drink a portion of the water while bathing, is an essential part of the ritual and procedure to be observed by all true worshippers. Unfortunately, on the occasion to which this narrative relates, the level of the water in the river was very low — hardly any circulation was observable in the little bay—and this circumstance was undoubtedly an important factor in bringing about the disasters to be presently described.

As Indian centres of population go, Hardwar is a cleanly town. In the immediate vicinity of the Har-ki-pairi itself, there are a number of narrow unventilated lanes and gullies; but most of the buildings in the town itself are of masonry, and the principal thoroughfares are fairly broad and

well paved. In front, as already said, runs the river; crossed at fair times by temporary bridges giving access to an island and the great forests extending up to the foot-hills of the Himalayan mountains. Behind, are low hills streaked at intervals with ravines running up into them, and covered with scrubby vegetation and trees of moderate size. To the east, are situated, at a little distance, the small towns of Kankhal and Jawalapore with cultivated fields about them; while to the west lie the great forests and glades extending up the picturesque elevated valley known as the Dûn. It will be seen, therefore, that Hardwar lies more or less isolated, with sylvan and jungle surroundings on three sides—the last named furnishing, with shade and water readily available, very convenient halting-places, to the Indian rustic mind, for a temporary sojourn. A railway connects the town with the rest of India generally. It is desirable to recollect this configuration of the locality in order to understand some of the difficulties which confronted the officials in their later operations.

India is essentially a country where the unexpected happens, and the fact engenders an attitude of mind on the part of officials which is favourable to rapid resolution and prompt organisation. It was not long before it was

recognised that the coming fair was fraught with great possibilities. It might go off with few incidents and a small gathering—it might, on the other hand, be a very big thing indeed. It was known that the festival was held in very great reverence by most Hindus, in the Punjab and Rajputana especially; but then it occurred so seldom that the auspicious period might come and go without the majority of people hearing anything about it. But the wiser and more experienced Anglo-Indians did not hold this view — knowing the efficient, if mysterious, methods of communication which have existed in the country from remote ages. And so it came quite naturally to pass, that timely orders were issued to the local authorities to take steps to "shepherd" and protect a probable collection of some three to four hundred thousand people on the appointed dates; and at the same time secure that such arrangements should possess sufficient elasticity and power of expansion to deal with, if necessary, a much larger population.

The policy of the Government of India has always been, and is now, to interfere with these pilgrims as little as possible, but, as the history of fairs in the past incontestably proves, the adoption of a *laisser faire* attitude on the part of the State in such matters would be inexcusable. It has to

think of the greatest good of the greatest number. An epidemic of such a disease as cholera, at such a place as Hardwar, threatens the whole of Northern India. The time had been when these immense concourses of people had surged with no control or method through the densely packed streets and crowded into the fetid stagnant pool, with consequences even now terrible to think of. Hundreds had been crushed to death; robbery and violence had been rampant; year after year the routes taken by the returning pilgrims had been mapped out by the festering corpses of those who had fallen and died by the way—and the infected people, fleeing to their homes, had sown the disease broadcast over the whole of the country. The interference of Government in the ordering of such gatherings was at first much resented, but it may be fairly claimed that a great change of opinion has occurred in this respect, and that to-day all classes have come to recognise the necessity and advantage of such control. It may, however, be readily conceived that an unusual combination of firmness, tact and consideration on the part of those in command, is imperatively demanded to secure the success of such operations without offending the religious and social sentiments of the worshippers gathered at the spot; especially as now and again it happens

that a question of such magnitude and difficulty presents itself, that an excessive respect for susceptibilities and an undue tolerance of dangerous conditions, may amount, not only to cruel kindness to the pilgrims themselves, but also to little less than criminal neglect of the welfare and safety of the population of the country at large. And such a question arose in the present instance.

With a capable railway staff and adequate rolling stock, the satisfactory transport of pilgrims to and from these great fairs presents no extraordinary difficulties. With experienced and energetic police officers supported by a sufficient force, the people, quiet and law-abiding, can be "personally conducted" safely and comfortably to and from the pool, and also protected from violence and robbery. Above all, with a capable and tactful Magistrate acting in concert with his superior officer the Commissioner, the whole organisation can be welded together and effectively directed as a working machine. But there is one thing beyond the power of man to ensure—and that is the absence of epidemic disease, especially cholera. Much can be accomplished no doubt by intelligent and thorough sanitary measures, to reduce the probability of its appearance; much can be done to arrest its spread by careful patrolling, watching, and early separation of sufferers should it be

present—and indeed the history of these great gatherings in late years attests these facts—but nevertheless, when all is said and done, invasion by the disease and its subsequent diffusion, awful in its virulence and rapidity, must be always contemplated as more than a contingency; and its prevention or stamping out consequently present the most anxious and urgent problems to be faced in connection with the management of these great fairs. Happily the measures will generally be successful—but sometimes not. This is not the place to enter into bacteriological questions in connection with the matter. The hard practical fact is that at the right time of the year for its appearance, cholera is always threatening, and it can very well be conceived that a community gathered from an immense area of which the medical history is imperfectly known, must be frequently pelted with disease germs—some to alight on favourable soil and develop in numbers and malignancy, and others to fall on stony ground and providentially perish. Sanitation can only multiply these sterile and unproductive tracts—patrolling and segregation can only (and that but imperfectly) localise and restrict the action of the microscopic enemy; carried too often, unfortunately, quite innocently on the person or raiment of the unsuspecting host.

It was the fate of the writer, as chief sanitary adviser of the Government, to be the officer in charge of the sanitary procedure at the Mahabarni fair now described. Early in February 1892, a meeting was held at Hardwar at which the Magistrate, the Sanitary Commissioner, and the Civil Surgeon were present; when the plan of campaign was settled and the necessary measures decided upon and initiated. Space will not permit of an extended description of them. They included a thorough cleaning up of the town and its surroundings; the organisation of extensive conservancy arrangements; the prevention of overcrowding in houses; the patrolling of the site; the watching of arrivals by rail and road or of pilgrims already gathered on the spot, in order to detect and immediately isolate cases of disease; the examination of the origin and quality of the food sold in the bazaars; and the construction and staffing of hospitals both for the treatment of the actually sick, or for the isolation of suspected persons. Suffice to say that they were modelled on the lines of a system which had proved completely successful at an immense fair held at the same place the year before, and, indeed if anything, were more extended in scope, and elaborate in particulars. Some notion of their size may be gathered from the fact that nearly seven hundred

conservancy, and over two hundred patrolling, officials were employed; and, moreover, to be on the safe side, large reserves were held ready in the neighbouring districts to be called up at once if the necessity arose. This last arrangement proved most useful later. The drinking-water supply, always a great possible source of disease at such gatherings, was here above suspicion; for all pilgrims drank from the clean rapid river flowing direct from its source in the Eternal Snows.

From the 4th of March onwards, the responsible officers made their headquarters at Hardwar. Very busy, but very pleasant, were those earlier days; giving no hint of the darker ones to come. A large and commodious camp was pitched on the bank of the river just outside the town. Every tent was a centre of hospitality. Guests came down by rail to see the arrangements, visit the temples, feed the fish in the sacred pool, float down the river on strange rafts constructed of inflated skins of animals, or wander through the bazaars of the town in search of old brass ornaments and implements, curious rosaries used by the pilgrims, and quaint lacquered toys beloved of children. All officials were out all day on their horses, inspecting and directing operations, and the memory lingers gratefully of the many happy, cheery evenings spent enjoying the generous

hospitality of the genial Commissioner and the Magistrate. But it was hot—much too hot for the time of year—flies were very abundant, and the water in the sacred pool was terribly low. The engineers did their best, by constructing temporary training works, to improve matters in the last respect; but the level of the water in the river rendered their efforts of but small avail. These things worried, for they portended trouble; but still all did their utmost and hoped for the best. Then again the recent history of Hardwar excited misgivings. During the last hot weather there had been a good deal of cholera there, and cases had occurred as late as September. It was the opinion of the writer at the time that no relation existed between these previous cases and the subsequent outbreak at the fair in the following March; but looking back with the experience gained in later years, he is not now so sure of this. But in any case, were fairs to be interdicted under such circumstances, very few would be held in India at all; and such an extensive prohibition of religious gatherings is, for political reasons, unthinkable. The risk of such a causation, however, was not overlooked, and all localities in which the disease had formerly occurred, were carefully cleaned up and disinfected. A satisfactory feature of the situation was that the areas

from which the pilgrims were coming were apparently free from disease, and the danger of importation of infection therefore much diminished. Upon the whole, although there were light clouds on the horizon, the outlook was fairly clear.

A small fair, the Holi, occurred on the 13th, and passed off without sickness—which was reassuring. But it immediately became obvious that great numbers of the pilgrims intended to stay on for the far more important ones, the Somwati and Mahabarni, eleven and thirteen days later. Comparatively few left, and the flow of new arrivals to the spot set in about the middle of the month—growing greater day by day. They came by rail, in carts, and on foot, in their thousands: the sturdy Hindu residents of the Punjab, the manly Sikhs, the people of Rohilkhund and the North-Western Provinces, the inhabitants of distant Rajputana, the Bengalees, the Mahrattas—all India seemed to be contributing its quota to the great gathering. And with them came great swarms of wild semi-nude figures, clustering together in weird encampments—the roaming, irresponsible, religious mendicants of the East. All day and all night were heard the whistles of the numerous special trains, the tinkling of bells on the plodding oxen drawing the rough country carts, and the noise of a great

multitude moving along the highways on foot, laughing, chatting, and occasionally joining in a great shout of religious import. All was gaiety and enjoyment. The old folk, the young men and maidens decked in their simple finery, the children, the big village dogs running beside the strange vehicles, the well-to-do tradesman, the "sadhu" in his ashes and waist-cloth, the itinerant proprietor of bovine monstrosities, and many other curious specimens of humanity—all wandered along in the great stream of pilgrims flowing towards their goal, the sacred Har-ki-pairi. They accommodated themselves in the lodging-houses and rest-houses, or formed little encampments on the numerous vacant spaces in the jungle round the town; and at night this was ringed with a cordon of brightly burning fires, at which the pilgrims sat, talked, and cooked their modest meals, well into the warm darkness.

All went well until the morning of the 22nd—when two cases of cholera were reported in the heart of the settlement, and close to the sacred pool. One was that of a shopkeeper who had not left Hardwar except on one occasion fifteen days before his attack, when he had been to Delhi and remained there for twenty-four hours. Inquiries showed that there had been no cholera in that city at the time. The other was that of

a resident of far-away Dera Ghazi Khan, who had been in Hardwar for five days. Here again it was ascertained that no cholera had existed in the place he had come from. The relatives of both cases could assign no possible explanation of the seizures. The sufferers were taken to hospital and died. Their relations and friends were isolated, and the houses occupied by the victims thoroughly disinfected and evacuated.

Next day, the 23rd, two more cases occurred in quite another part of the settlement, and under circumstances which quite precluded the idea that they had brought the disease with them. It was but too clearly apparent, therefore, that the source of infection lay in Hardwar itself, and, after consultation with the Civil Surgeon (who had also inspected and inquired into the cases), a letter to this effect was sent to the Magistrate, advising that, if the outbreak extended, the fair should not be held. All pleasure-seekers fled, and those responsible for the conduct of affairs settled down to wrestle with a serious emergency. It was not long in declaring itself.

It was a very anxious collection of men—the Commissioner, the Magistrate, the Sanitary Commissioner, and the Civil Surgeon—which met immediately in committee to discuss the situation. There were perhaps some seventy thousand pil-

grims then on the spot, and only four cases of cholera were known to have occurred. So far, although disturbing, there was nothing alarming about the position. But it wanted three days to the date of the great Mahabarni bathing festival, and during this interval some two to three hundred thousand people would be hurrying to the spot. What would happen during those three days? All evidence and knowledge pointed to the probability of a great extension of the outbreak during this time, and if this occurred the results would be appalling; for, without considering the mortality in Hardwar itself, the infected pilgrims returning to their homes would spread the disease broadcast over the land. Still, the gravity of such a procedure as that of breaking up a religious gathering was fully recognised, and it was determined at first to send telegrams to all neighbouring districts urging intending visitors not to come; while at the same time Indian gentlemen of position went among the people, endeavouring to persuade those already on the spot to abandon the pilgrimage and to depart while there was yet time to avoid the danger.

These measures were perfectly futile, nor indeed was much expectation formed of their success. Practically nobody left, and the wave of devotees,

men, women, and children, rolled into the town higher than ever. By the evening of the 23rd more cases had occurred, and, worse still, scattered about all over the town, and even upon its outskirts. Telegrams were sent to the headquarters of all railways to stop booking to Hardwar—and it was an interesting instance of the power of the telegraph to see how the traffic to the locality immediately stopped. This, though a valuable, was, however, but a palliative, measure, for the roads and jungle paths were still open. The fair site was evidently hopelessly infected, and, a fresh roll of victims having been received next morning, a long telegram was sent to the Government describing the situation, and requesting authority to break up the fair. Sanction being accorded, the necessary orders were at once issued by the Magistrate.

It was one thing, however, to promulgate such orders, and another thing to carry them into effect. They were proclaimed with much beating of drums all over the town and neighbourhood, but were totally ignored by the people. Trains had, of course, been running *from* Hardwar, but departed almost empty. It was soon obvious that more strenuous action was required, and the police were accordingly instructed to clear the streets. No active opposition was offered, but the passive

resistance of the crowds proved most troublesome. Again and again were the thoroughfares denuded; the people merely moved into the adjacent jungles, which, as was said before, almost encircled the town, and, if swept away in one direction, the obstinately determined worshippers only sought circuitous paths in the vicinity and re-entered the place at another point. Despite the statements which later on appeared in the vernacular press, the police discharged their duties with great consideration; but it is idle to pretend that much hardship was not caused by these operations. Persons in front of the mob could not move on account of the pressure behind, and were consequently subjected to considerable hustling and often roughly repulsed; and when the crowds broke up and dispersed down the side streets, the jostled, frightened people fled in all directions—husbands were separated from their wives, and wives from their children. It was wonderful, however, how orderly the people were. Doubtless furious indignation existed, but the men were hampered by the presence of their families and attempted little real resistance. There were happily but few casualties, and very little actual violence. For four whole days and nights did the struggle last. At any point where pressure was in the least degree relaxed, the persistently

determined pilgrims continued to swarm in. A strong guard had to be kept on the Har-ki-pairi itself; for, in at least two instances, bathers tottering out of the pool fell down upon the steps, and, when lifted up, were found to be actually suffering from the fell disease. It was not until the evening of the 28th that the fair site was really evacuated.

The arduous and uncongenial duty of dispersing the gathering, fell, of course, upon the Commissioner, the Magistrate, and the Superintendent of Police, who were day and night toiling at their posts; but it is doubtful whether the work of the writer was less exacting. After all these years, he cannot think of those four days without a shudder. Cholera was raging, and with a panic-stricken population of some seventy to one hundred thousand, strange to the place and constantly on the move, it was no light task to hold the organisation together, and to keep up some semblance of sanitary method and medical relief. More than a hundred of the conservancy men bolted one morning; but fortunately this was an isolated incident, and the whole of the staff, both European and Indian, worked with the greatest devotion and industry all through these trying times. Over seventy people had been admitted into the hospitals, of whom fifty-three had suc-

cumbed; and over thirty had been taken out, dead or dying, from the returning trains. Moreover, this by no means represented the total mortality. It was impossible to ride with search-parties round the outskirts of the town without the horse frequently shying at inert, gruesome objects; and the clouds of vultures hovering over the neighbouring jungles told their own repulsive tale. The columns of smoke rose day and night from the "burning ghâts" on the river banks. And presently telegraphic reports of outbreaks from the surrounding districts, added one more trouble, for they indicated that the regrettable delay in the dispersal of the gathering had to a considerable extent defeated the principal object of the proceedings.

With the departure of the pilgrims ended the work of the local authorities; though the writer and the Civil Surgeon were detained for some time treating the surviving sick, and conducting operations for cleaning up and disinfecting the site and roads leading therefrom. It was a depressing task, cheered however by the generous recognition by the Government of the more or less abortive efforts of all the officials and subordinates concerned. It was not, however, for some while after that they heard of the aftermath of their proceedings. The Government of India, it was

understood, had been bombarded from all sides with complaints, accusations, protests and representations, more or less based on fact, but in most cases so obviously exaggerated and distorted as to completely destroy any confidence in the accuracy of the information or the good faith of their authors. The police were charged with gross inhumanity — nor did the Commissioner and Magistrate, despite their former popularity, escape without censure. The writer (who is fond of angling) was described as sitting during the whole of the proceedings upon a projection of the temple, hauling out the tame sacred fish from the holy pool—absolutely callous and indifferent to the suffering and misery all around! Perhaps the most scathing criticism, however, reached him many years later, when a faquir, in discussing the affair and quite ignorant of his hearer's identity, exonerated the Government of any culpability in the matter beyond that of having carelessly placed the control of the fair in the hands of three "sahibs" who were unfortunately mad! As a result, however, of these representations, a full inquiry was instituted which bore good fruit, for a very large sum was granted to improve the general sanitation of the town, and especially of the vicinity of the Har-ki-pairi; while extensive training works were constructed so as to ensure a good and ample

flushing of the bathing place under all conditions of the level of water in the river. These measures proved subsequently of the greatest utility. An invitation was sent to the principal Hindu Chiefs and leading citizens to join in furthering this costly and beneficent work, but an inspection of the tablet on which the names of the subscribers are engraved, does not convey the impression that the appeal was particularly successful.

This is the story of an outbreak of disease at one of the great Indian fairs, which is related at some length because it is a good example of the difficulties encountered by the Anglo-Indian official in carrying out procedure which is unquestionably expedient, but which is either not understood, or the necessity for which is entirely unappreciated, by the people. It is but right, however, to look at such questions from the Hindu point of view in order to obtain a proper sense of proportion in forming an opinion concerning the apparently irrational attitude of the Indian peasant with regard to such matters. In the first place, sanitary procedure is an entirely new thing to him; he has not the slightest belief in its utility, and is perfectly sure that its adoption often becomes an intolerable nuisance. It may be all very well, he thinks, for "sahibs"—men of quite different constitutions and habits, and believers

in a theological system for which he has no particular respect. He holds himself the simple creed that epidemics are God-sent, and that to attempt to interfere with their progress may very possibly bring about a greater evil than the one which it is sought to avoid. This has always been found a great difficulty in introducing vaccination as a protection against smallpox; a disease which is held to be a manifestation of a particular goddess. He accepts his fate with resignation. The manner and circumstances of his death may have terrors for him, but of death itself he has little fear. It is but the termination of one existence, and the commencement of another which itself is only one of a long series of future states—each of which will be better or worse, more elevated or degraded, according to the manner in which he has passed the preceding state of being. These views may not be universally prevalent among the educated Hindu residents of towns, but then this element is comparatively very small, and much water will run under the bridge before the dweller in the rural areas will change his mental attitude or alter his beliefs on such subjects.

Since the occurrence of the events recorded, it has been the lot of the writer to organise and control the sanitary procedure at many very large and important festivals; but the memory of this

ill-fated gathering looms larger than that of them all, and has caused him many searchings of heart. His arrangements completely failed, and the measures subsequently adopted were, politically speaking, extremely unwise. But, from the standpoint of the philanthropist, they were undoubtedly demanded, and unquestionably saved many thousands of lives. It was a difficult position, and one of many which the Anglo-Indian official is called upon to face — where prompt and effective action is unexpectedly called for, and where those responsible for the lives and welfare of the people have to take their courage in both hands. Happily however, in recent times, the authorities have been rarely called upon to face such staggering conditions as those which suddenly presented themselves at the Mahabarni fair in 1892.

A SIMPLE EXPEDIENT.

THERE is a Muhammadan festival in India, held once a year and known as the Muharram, which is a fertile source of anxiety to the officials. Its origin is this. When the Prophet Muhammad died, his first three successors were selected democratically by the faithful. But there were many who considered that the Caliphate should have descended to his son-in-law Ali. Ali became the fourth Caliph, but, as tradition has it, his two sons Hassan and Hussain, attacked by a rival, died bravely fighting at the battle of Kerbela. They were regarded by the believers in the hereditary principle as the highest of martyrs. Thus a great schism developed, and Islam became more or less divided into these, the Shiahs—and the Sunnis, who were quite content that the succession should be settled by the people. The former are much less numerous in India than the latter, but still, in some localities such as Lucknow, Hyderabad, and other smaller centres of population, they

are very numerous and strong. Most places contain a certain number of them, and here the Muharram is not only regularly kept, but is also the occasion of much excitement—often fanatical and turbulent. When the Shiahs thus commemorate the death of Hassan and Hussain, large models of their tombs or shrines, called "tazias," are constructed of bamboo, coloured paper, and tinsel, and are borne out of the city by a great concourse of excited mourners with bands of music, and buried or disposed of in a selected place well away from the inhabited area. At such times the air is electrical, and there is always a great risk of collisions between Muhammadans and Hindus—especially if a religious festival of the latter, such as the Dasehra, should chance to occur at the same time. The feelings of the believers in the two faiths differ greatly on such occasions. The Hindu festivals are usually cheerful and even joyous gatherings, but this particular Muhammadan one commemorates a lamentable and gloomy incident. But even when there is not such an unfortunate conjunction of dates for such assemblages, no one is ever quite sure whether the Muharram will pass off quietly or not. And it was about to be observed in the city of Jelalabad, where the Shiahs were both numerous and powerful.

Making cart-wheels.

The trouble commenced in this wise. Kishen Lall, "bunneah" or tradesman, journeying back to his shop in Jelalabad after a visit to a neighbouring village, where he had gone to purchase "ghi," or clarified butter, for sale in the course of his business, was very much struck by the way in which a branch of a "peepul" (*Ficus religiosa*, a tree of the fig tribe very sacred to Hindus), which overhung the roadway, had grown during the past year. He remarked on this to his companion, one Balchund, his assistant in his business; who was guiding the patient buffalo with its load of the commodity referred to bestowed in brass vessels in a sort of sack on its back, and occasionally accelerating its movement by exclamations of indignant abuse. Balchund's attention being drawn to the tree, he also expressed his surprise, and added in a casual way that the "tazias" could not now pass under the branch as they had done the year before. Exchanging the "hookah" or country pipe, by occasional pulls at which they were relieving the tedium of the journey, they then both relapsed into silence, and duly reached home without any further incident.

The "bunneah," after eating his food that evening, narrated the rather commonplace details of the expedition to his wife, and incidentally repeated Balchund's observation. "But they always

go that way," said she, "what will they do now the road is blocked by the tree?" He had no reply ready, and fell back upon the safe remark, "Khúda jánta" (God knows), the usual pious formula of Indians on such occasions; and settled himself to repose.

He thought, however, a little about the difficulty, and next morning mentioned the matter to his "parohit," or family priest. He had no intention of making mischief by so doing, but members of the Hindu community just outside the pale of the venerated Brahman caste are always the most punctilious about details of religious observance, and he well knew that no good Hindu would tolerate any mutilation of the sacred tree. The "parohit" went off and told the "pujari," or sacerdotal custodian of the principal shrine, who mentioned the position of the branch to a good many of the devotees who came to the place of worship during the day. Several of them went down to look at it, and it was not very long before the matter was being very thoroughly discussed in the bazaar (business portion of the town). Muhammadans said the branch must come down—Hindus said it should not, and that the followers of the Prophet must take another route. A great deal of animosity between the members of the two religions sprang

up as if by magic; for even the Sunnis were ready to side with their co-religionists where any question of a conflict of faiths was concerned. All normally lived together harmoniously enough, but now the population of the city quickly ranged itself into two different and hostile camps. There is always a good deal of latent antagonism between Hindus and Muhammadans, but this seldom appears on the surface, unless, as in the present case, some infringement of privileges as regards religious observances is suspected or occurs. Then all the fat is in the fire in a moment.

The Indian "Tehsildar" (a Government official with magisterial powers, and commonly the right hand of the principal European authority in the district), was one Wazir Ali, a Muhammadan, and a shrewd capable man. Whatever his own sentiments were regarding the controversy, he did not let them appear; and indeed had always kept up an appearance of impartiality in the discharge of his duties which had not only rendered him a very efficient officer, but had also earned him the respect of the people generally. He was very soon aware of the excited state of feeling in Jelalabad, and sent off a confidential letter by a trusted messenger to the Magistrate at headquarters. It wanted five days to the date when the "tazias" were to be carried out.

Swain Sahib, the civilian who held this appointment, was also fortunately an excellent officer; courteous, firm and tactful, and moreover had been some years in his district. He was a little disturbed, but not much surprised, at the news he had received. Jelalabad had never been a troublesome place, and its inhabitants, as a body, were law-abiding and respectable. But he knew that, contrary to the rule, the members of the two faiths were, numerically and effectively, nearly equal—the followers of the Prophet mostly Shiahs—and that, if rioting set in, the contest would probably be long and well-sustained. He recognised how easily a few fanatics—most likely more or less intoxicated with Indian hemp, or some other similar and easily procurable drug producing violent temporary insanity—might precipitate a collision; and he knew also that in all Indian towns there is invariably a considerable section of the population, the "have nots" of the community, always ready for any looting and mischief. He did not suspect the agitator; this was an affair of rival faiths, and it could only be distorted into a cause of offence against the Government by some injudicious act on the part of the authorities. He looked upon the circumstances indeed as he would have done upon an unfortunate, and rather natural, squabble among children

—likely enough, however, when occurring among grown men, to prove sufficiently dangerous. He sent for Norris, the police officer, showed him the "Tehsildar's" letter, and ordered him to proceed at once to Jelalabad with a sufficient force of armed police and mounted men, but to confine himself strictly to merely maintaining order until further developments occurred. Two days later, he put the headquarters station in charge of the Joint Magistrate, and proceeded himself to the spot.

His reception by the principal residents was most satisfactory on the surface, but he noticed a good many cries of "dohai, sahib" (justice, sahib) from the back of the crowd, and that, although it was broad daylight, several persons were carrying lighted torches—a time-honoured custom and method of drawing attention to the darkness of the situation — as he rode to the Sessions House where he intended to stay until the festival was over. Very early next morning, he and Wazir Ali rode out to inspect the tree, the position of which formed the bone of contention. It stood about half a mile from the city, in the centre of an open plain through which the road ran. This road was a metalled one, with rough, slightly raised, ground on either side, and ran directly under the offending branch. He

had a tape with him and carefully measured the distance of this from the ground, and, turning to the "Tehsildar," asked him what he thought would be the height of the largest "tazia" likely to be brought out. The latter had thought of this, and as nearly all were constructed and ready, he had made inquiries and was able to give a very close estimate in reply. Obviously any structures of this size could not pass under the obstruction. Swain Sahib lit a cheroot and walked up and down cogitating for a time, and then turned abruptly to his companion standing silently by. "Tehsildar sahib," said he, "apparently this limb must come off or the 'tazias' must take another route, and in either case there is sure to be a disturbance." "This is surely a true word," was the answer, "and yet it may be that Allah in his mercy will suggest a way to the 'sahib' that this evil may be averted." The Magistrate, disappointed, frowned at what he regarded as merely a polite phrase, and, remounting, rode back to the Sessions House; followed by the "Tehsildar" and a few people who had collected round them.

Now he had caused a notice to be sent to the principal Muhammadan and Hindu residents, that he would receive deputations from both sides at noon that day to hear their grievances and de-

liver his judgment, and he knew perfectly well that upon the nature of his utterance would depend whether there was to be a riot or not. It would of course be fairly easy to quell this with the aid of the police, but there was almost sure to be bloodshed, which he was extremely anxious to avoid, and the only method of doing so was to find some way out of the difficulty which would satisfy both parties—and this seemed impossible. He was racking his brains after breakfast to think of some scheme, when the "Tehsildar" was again announced and was at once given permission to enter. Invited to be seated, he took a chair, and, to Swain Sahib's irritation, commenced a series of questions regarding the "sahib's" health, and the tolls he would like imposed at a small ferry some distance off. But the latter soon saw the official's eye travelling in the direction of the clerk and orderly in the room, and, grasping the situation, he dismissed these officials and turned to Wazir Ali with a gleam of hope. "Tehsildar sahib," he said quickly, "this is a 'mushkil-ke-bat' (difficult matter). What can be done?" Wazir Ali shrugged his shoulders respectfully, and scratched one unshod foot with the other for a minute or two. A thought, it seemed, had come to him last night which might not have occurred to even

a wise "sahib" like his own. And in a low voice he made his suggestion—at the same time counselling secrecy lest the scheme should be thwarted if known to the people beforehand.

When the Magistrate met the deputations an hour later, his manner was cheerful and confident. He greeted the embarrassed delegates in a friendly tone, and when they were seated, after much shuffling of unshod feet, round the big table in the Sessions House committee-room, he invited the spokesman of the Muhammadans to state the grievance of his co-religionists. This was at first difficult to discover, for Muhamad Jan, their representative, devoted at least ten minutes to a description of the relief and joy experienced by all the followers of the Prophet in Jelalabad, at the fortunate occurrence of such a wise and beneficent "sahib" as Swain Sahib having come himself to do justice to the quiet and frightened Muhammadans at a time when they were about to be subjected to much heartless tyranny, and to have their most sacred religious feelings ruthlessly trampled upon. But, having delivered himself of these complimentary and reassuring remarks, he went on to say that the "tazias" had from remote ages been always permitted to go out by one road, and that the Hindus were intending to deprive them of this time-honoured privi-

lege on account of some tree which overhung the roadway. Finally, he felt sure however, that the danger was now past, and that the good and wise "sahib" would prevent this iniquity, and see that justice was speedily done.

The Magistrate listened patiently and attentively to this oration, but without comment; and then, turning to the other leader, asked him courteously to express the views of the Hindus. Bisheshur Dyal, "vakeel" (lawyer), promptly rose, and, from his opening remarks, it appeared that the Hindus in Jelalabad had been equally delighted at the advent of Swain Sahib, and the certain assurance that now no longer would cruel injustice be permitted, nor might allowed to triumph over right. It seemed that since his appearance on the scene, like the sun rising in the morning, all the women had ceased weeping in their homes, and that the livers of the men which had "turned to water" had now regained their normal condition. But, he continued, it was impossible for a poor man like himself to conceal from the "sahib" that the Muhammadans had openly boasted that they would cut down or maim the sacred "peepul" tree of the poor Hindus, and that many wild and fierce men among these in the city had said that this should not be, and that far from allow-

ing it, they would——, but out of respect for the "sahib's" majesty, his tongue declined to repeat what they said. He was proceeding to quote some sections from the Penal Code bearing on the subject, when the Magistrate stopped him. "I also know the Penal Code. It is a large book, and contains sections relating to other offences you have not mentioned," he said dryly. Then turning to the delegates, "There is no reason," he continued, pleasantly smiling, "for all this ill-feeling and excitement. Of course the Muhammadans shall take out their 'tazias' by the same route as formerly, and of course no one shall touch the sacred 'peepul' tree of the Hindus. You have my permission to retire."

Dead silence followed this unexpected announcement. "But 'sahib'——" said a voice, and stopped. Nothing further followed the interjection. The Magistrate quietly rose, as did all the delegates, and, once more beaming upon them with a pleasant smile, he returned their polite "salaams" as they all shuffled out of the the room.

After their departure, he sat down and wrote a long letter to headquarters, sealed it, and sent it off by special messenger; and then had a lengthy conversation with Norris and the "Tehsildar."

As a consequence of these arrangements, a strong body of police encamped on the plain which led from the city, nominally to prevent any attempt being made to mutilate or injure the inconvenient tree—Norris himself being in command of the force. This done, Swain spent the rest of the day in discharging his usual routine work, and made no further reference to the difficulty.

All that day and well into the night, nothing was spoken of or discussed in Jelalabad except the "burra sahib's" (Magistrate's) mysterious pronouncement; but no disturbance occurred. The police patrolled the streets, and the "Tehsildar" with his orderlies wandered about among the people. To all the numerous inquiries he had only one reply. "Patience, brothers; if the 'sahib' says all will be well, all will be well." And it is a great deal to the credit of Swain Sahib that his reputation for truth and straightforwardness was such that most of the people believed him.

The day for the carrying out of the "tazias" broke calm and clear; and, at the first gleam of dawn, the Magistrate, Norris, and Wazir Ali met by the "peepul." All looked jaded and sleepy, as if they had been up all night. The deserted road stretched away from the city towards the spot, a mile or so distant, where the "tazias"

were to be buried, and a light dressing of earth had been placed upon it. Presently a line of armed police drew up on either side to keep the route clear, while a cordon of the same kept the great Hindu mob which was collecting, from approaching the "peepul" tree which stood by the roadside. "Is all right, Holmes?" said Swain to another European who had now come up. "Just got it done in time," replied Holmes the District Engineer, "and the coolies worked like blazes. I gave them extra pay to do it in silence, and I don't think the police let any one come near enough to see what they were up to." "Good," said Swain, smiling; "now stand by with your men to clear the road when the procession arrives. I'll hold up my hand as a signal—whistle when you're ready. By Jove! here they come."

In the distance, slowly moving along the track, was what looked like a great black snake crawling across the plain towards where they stood. As the great multitude approached nearer, the sounds of music, wailing and lamentation filled the air, and presently could be seen the great models of the shrines of the martyred saints, swaying gently as they were borne along on men's heads. By the side of the serried ranks, ran and danced excited fanatics shouting the words "Hassan" and "Hussain" in every tone

of wild woe and affliction, tearing their hair and beating their breasts—some even wounding themselves with knives, so that the blood flowed down their bodies. As they drew closer, there was a great stirring of the Hindu crowd by the tree, and volleys of abuse and curses were shouted out—but Norris, at the head of a dozen mounted police, rode up to the front and peremptorily ordered the mob to be silent and keep back. The head of the procession, with the leading "tazias," had now arrived within a hundred yards of the spot where the tree overhung the road; and at this juncture, Swain, accompanied by Norris, the "Tehsildar," and half a dozen rather uncomfortable Indian gentlemen whom he had summoned to assist him in maintaining order, threw up his hand and rode out to meet the concourse. The group was large enough to obstruct the view of the portion of the road immediately behind it—and this area was suddenly occupied by a swarm of coolies headed by Holmes. At the sight of the small body of Europeans and Indian gentlemen blocking the road, the procession stopped, and two volumes of voices—one of rage and the other of elation—rose up from the opposing factions. "Let the 'tazias' pass. Cut down the tree, cut down the tree," shouted the followers of the Prophet; while yells

of defiance came from the Hindus. It was a critical moment. But Swain held up his arm again and called out in a stentorian voice, "Silence. Would you have blood on your heads? Your 'tazias' shall surely pass, and we are but clearing the road. Where are your leaders that I may explain?" But these gentlemen (somewhere in the rear) were in no hurry to come forward, and for a few minutes the column remained stationary. Just then a shrill whistle came from behind Swain and his party—sounding very strangely in the silence which had temporarily fallen on the vast assemblage. He and his party heard it, and wheeled to one side of the road; while the former shouted "No matter. Carry on your 'tazias'; the way is clear." But the head of the column still waited hesitatingly. In front of them the road lay open, passing directly under the limb of the tree as before. But a strange thing had happened. Holmes' coolies had rapidly demolished the former apparently level road, which they had temporarily constructed of bamboos, planks, and matting with a covering of earth on it, during the night; and what the leading files of the procession now saw was a road, it is true, but lowered by a gentle incline on either side of the obstructing branch to a depth of six feet or so below the

level of the surrounding ground—leaving ample space for the loftiest "tazias" to pass beneath the obstacle! "Chelo, chelo" (get on, get on), roared Norris; and Wazir Ali, galloping up to the head of the column, called out, "It's a good road and straight and clear. Chelo, chelo." And, after a momentary pause, it silently and reluctantly did! The police stood to their arms, and Norris's hand went instinctively down to his revolver. The slightest thing would have precipitated a conflict. But presently, as the last "tazia" passed easily under the tree and came again into view as it reached the level of the surrounding plain, to the great relief of all the officials the cries of wailing and lamentation broke out once more, and the long procession wended its sorrowing way along the highway to its destination! Shouts of abuse and anger rose from the onlooking Hindu mob; but these were speedily checked by Swain, who, riding rapidly up to the front of it, called out, "Tum log, chelo bhi" (you people, get on too)—and the police under Norris at the same time executing a movement which looked as if it might easily develop into a charge, the gathering broke up and speedily melted away into the city. The difficulty was over.

The delighted Norris, galloping back to rejoin his party, overtook Wazir Ali on his white, pink-

eyed, Roman-nosed horse, respectfully riding behind the Magistrate jogging along back to his rather deferred breakfast. "Tehsildar Sahib," said he excitedly and reining up, "you're a daisy." "Huzur" (your honour), said this dignified but perplexed official, whose knowledge of English did not extend to the latest conversational flights of fancy, "Hum ne samajta hain" (I don't understand). "I mean," said Norris, a little taken aback, "yours was a ripping idea about lowering the road. The 'burra sahib' is very 'khush' (pleased), and I expect to see your name in the next Gazette as a 'Rai Bahadur'" (Indian title of honour). "It is by your honour's favour," was the smiling and courteous, if somewhat indefinite, reply.

And it is pleasing to be able to record that the "Tehsildar's" name *did* appear with the coveted distinction in the next roll of honour emanating from Olympus—and that before the date of the next Muharram came round, a convenient diversion of the road (commencing a long way from the troublesome "peepul") had been constructed to the satisfaction of all parties. Swain's official report of the proceedings to the Commissioner was a model of terseness. "The Muharram was celebrated in Jelalabad as usual. Some misapprehension seems to have existed regarding the

necessity of cutting down a portion of a 'peepul' tree, or altering the route to be taken by the 'tazias,' but I have the honour to report that both difficulties were removed by a simple expedient, and the whole affair passed off quite satisfactorily." But in the city, all the law-abiding and peaceful residents recognised that a great peril had been averted, and the story of how Swain Sahib—"that 'burra hoshyar' (very clever) sahib"—had accomplished it, is told with admiration and some amusement to this day!

A HIMALAYAN TRAGEDY.

THE traveller in the northern part of that mighty range of mountains known as the Himalayas, might perchance come upon a collection of ruined stone walls of what were evidently originally small dwellings; built upon a long narrow ledge partly natural and partly artificial, and situated on the northern face of a lofty hill facing the Eternal Snows. There are about twenty of these deserted houses, and a fairly close scrutiny would disclose the fact that all of them had been at some past time subjected to the action of fire, for the stones are blackened and cracked as the result of intense heat, and among the *debris* in their interior are still remains of rotten charred beams and other fragments of timber. The ledge is not more than fifteen yards in breadth at the broadest part, and the front of it is held up by a rough retaining wall of large stones and boulders — many of which, however, have fallen out of position. A narrow staircase in this wall leads down to a few small,

fairly level pieces of land, each about a quarter of an acre in extent and situated one below the other; and although these are now overgrown with tangled undergrowth and such bushes as the wild raspberry, &c., it is not difficult to see from the character of the vegetation here and there that they were once cultivated areas growing the various cereal and leguminous crops used as food by the people in this part of the country. The site has a melancholy and desolate appearance, and suggests that at some past time it has been the scene of some untoward event which has necessitated its abandonment — as indeed is the case.

But although the actual once-inhabited area itself, presents this gloomy and depressing aspect, its position and surroundings are sublimely grand and beautiful. The wanderer, standing on the ledge referred to, looks directly on the mighty Snowy Range; with nothing but the peaks and vast round backs of an entanglement of lofty mountains, mostly heavily wooded with such coniferous trees as the deodar and others of the same species which can grow at these great heights, between him and the home of the Great Gods. In the deep dark valleys between the elevations, rush the roaring torrents of the glacier-fed rivers. On the right front towers

Nanda Devi, the loftiest mountain in the British Empire, over 25,000 feet in height; and to the immediate right are Nanda Kôt, over 22,000, and Trisul, with its three peaks which Hindu fancy compares to Shiva's trident, only two thousand feet lower. Still farther to the right is the Panch Chuli range—suggesting in shape the little mud-cooking places which Indians construct on the ground—with an elevation of 22,661 feet. To the left is Gungootri, one of the sources of the sacred Gunga, or Ganges; and, immediately in front, at a distance of fifty miles or so as the crow flies, are Kedarnath and holy Badrinath—upon the latter of which the god Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu and the beloved of Indian mothers, stood for a hundred years on one foot, subsisting on air, "emaciated and with veins swollen." There they all stand in their solemn majesty as they have probably stood for thousands of years —wrapped in their mantles of everlasting snow. Round their summits hang little gauzy clouds of this, blown off by the wind; and on their slopes the sun throws a rosy light, until, when the shades of evening fall, this is replaced by the vast grey shadows which wander over the glistening surface, producing the weirdest and most unearthly effects—presently giving place in their turn to the soft radiance of reflected moonlight

shimmering on the vast white untrodden fields of ice and snow. Nothing in nature can be more awe-inspiring and sublime.

Behind and on either side of the deserted plateau, are dense forests of coniferous and other lofty trees, full of birds of many kinds; including the lovely "monaul" or Impeyan pheasant, with its dark-blue and green iridescent metallic-looking plumage — the less highly coloured but perhaps equally beautiful "lungi," or Hastings tragopan, with its speckled brownish coat—and many others. At the foot of the hill on which the village once stood, is a long, deep, smiling valley, with the slopes leading down to it covered with the scarlet-flowered rhododendron over twenty feet in height, and with many other forms of sylvan beauty—while along the bottom of this valley can be discerned the silvery streak of a rapid, bright, and sparkling stream. The locality, remote from roads, is very sparsely populated, and abounds with game large and small, such as bears, leopards, "sambhur," "ghural," barking deer or "kakur," &c.; but here and there on the slopes of neighbouring hills, the eye detects little spots of dark colour surrounded by patches of lighter green than the prevailing hue of the woods themselves, which denote the position of little hamlets inhabited by almost primitive people, cultivating the coarse food

required for their support. Altogether it is a prospect combining such majesty and beauty as few other spots in the whole world can rival.

This is how Kilani looked in the year of grace 1890—a little blemish on the fair face of nature—but only seven years before this time, it had been a thriving settlement occupied by some fifty men, women, and children; leading their simple lives with very fair happiness and content. But then the blow had fallen which had blasted its existence, and the site had been abandoned — perhaps for ever. The circumstances which led up to this were as follows.

At the time at which this story opens, the headman of the village was one Durga Dutt. He was a Brahman; though in the Himalayas this is rather an elastic term, since there are so many subdivisions of the caste. Unlike nearly all the other residents of the hamlet, who wore brown blankets bound round their bodies and fastened on one shoulder by a long skewer-like iron pin, he was dressed in a short chintz coat padded with cotton; while pyjamas, or tight-fitting trousers, of similar materials, encased his lower limbs. Shoes made of the yellow "sambhur" leather protected his feet. On his head he wore a black, rather greasy, low, tight-fitting skull-cap, and, as a Hindu, he fastened his coat with tapes on

the right side — instead of on the left as do Muhammadans. He was fairly well off, as hill-men go — owning most of the cultivated land round the village, and a little elsewhere, and employing a certain number of the residents to help him; although a few of the better-class men had small holdings of their own. The small size of the settlement prevented it from being such an independent unit as village communities in India usually are, but it possessed a small sort of shop at which such articles as the commoner food-stuffs, chillies, turmeric, oil, tobacco, matches, and a few other necessaries, could sometimes be purchased—and it also maintained a barber and three or four conservancy servants to minister to the not very exacting requirements of the inhabitants. For skilled labour of any kind it was usually necessary to draw upon the resources of neighbouring villages—artisans and craftsmen, such as carpenters, masons, or tailors, working for a group of such centres of population. But not much outside assistance was, as a matter of fact, required, for the women wove and made the rough woollen garments and blankets, and all the men were sufficiently skilful with the axe to hew and trim the rough timber for their dwellings, &c., into a shape and form which fully satisfied local views regarding architectural beauty. Durga

Dutt, the trader, and two or three others, were of good caste, but the rest were mostly people of low position and of the cultivating classes. Nearly all were married, and the children tramped across the mountains every day to a village about a mile away, where, under a thatched shed and the tutelage of an extremely crude schoolmaster, they squatted on the ground, committing very elementary knowledge to memory by all repeating it over and over again in a loud voice until the fact or facts were impressed upon the mind—or tracing Hindi letters, at first in the dust with their fingers, and subsequently, at a more advanced stage of education, on small, black wooden boards, with white chalk. About three-quarters of a mile down the hill was situated a small shrine under a large tree, in charge of the "pujaree," or attendant priest, who in a general way looked after the religious wants of the villagers. They called themselves Hindus, but were quite as much Buddhists; and the umbrella of "The Illumined" nearly always appeared above the image of the god Shiva on their amulets and charms. They propitiated the latter grim god, and also his grimmer consort Kali, with sacrifices of goats and buffaloes on occasions of moment, but more usually entrusted their affairs to the local deity. Practically their belief was as much Animistic as anything else;

and nearly every pass, hill, or stream had its own particular godlet, shade, or spirit, to whom offerings in the shape of food, and fragments of garments hung on trees, were regularly made. Far away on the summits of the snowy peaks they knew dwelt the Great Gods, but these were too lofty, sublime and remote to be approached by people like themselves—probably among the great ones of the pantheon, the deity they most venerated was Indra, the god of rain and thunder, whom they pictured as dwelling on the towering mountain Nanda Devi, and with the manifestations of whose power and might they were all so familiar.

During the hot and rainy seasons, nearly every one was employed in the fields or planting rice in the bed of the valley, but when the cold weather came and the grain had been thrashed out by the feet of oxen, winnowed, and stored in great wicker baskets covered with mud, or buried under the dwellings, while the straw had been packed up in trees to be out of the way, there was not very much to do beyond ploughing, repairing the houses, wood cutting and clearing, extracting tar and resin from pine-trees, taking honey from the wild bees, collecting a thick ferruginous substance which oozed out of certain rocks and was worth, in the plains, its weight in silver as a tonic, &c.—and the

people were perforce, by the rigour of the climate, confined very much to their houses. These were all of one type: double-storied, with the lower one occupied by cattle, goats, and ponies—while the upper rooms, small, low-pitched, and with little or no ventilation, sheltered the inhabitants, crowded together in them for warmth, and existing somehow in an almost intolerably fouled atmosphere caused by the breath of the people themselves, and by the emanations rising up through the wooden floors from the usually filthy cattle-byre below. Efforts originated by a great administrator of the past, a former Commissioner of Kumaon, have to a considerable extent altered these conditions in villages near European settlements, but, in the remoter parts of the country, rules requiring the cattle, &c., to be housed away from the dwellings of the residents, are still more honoured in the breach than in the observance. As a rule such villages are very isolated, extremely picturesque, and exceedingly dirty.

When the events occurred to which this story relates, it was mid-winter, and extremely cold in Kilani. Bears had all retired to hibernate in lonely caves in the higher and more inaccessible hills, but leopards were numerous and bold; and the "thar," or male mountain goats, had come low down from the higher hills to the grazing grounds

to which the "thairna," or females, had preceded them. Fish were lying at the bottom of those rivers which were too rapid and tumultuous to freeze; though they could be caught occasionally by placing barbed hooks in the smaller runs and rivulets up which the finny inhabitants tried to force their way. A few birds could be trapped, but none of the villagers possessed guns or licenses to shoot, and these people do not use bows and arrows. Life, in short, was very dull and monotonous, and the people—uninstructed and ignorant of anything beyond the petty details of their primitive lives — talked, smoked, and slept, and longed for the time when the commencing spring should bring round again the toil and interest of sowing and cultivating for the summer and autumn crops.

But important events were impending. One dreary cold afternoon when gathering clouds foreboded a fall of snow, Chumpa, one of Durga Dutt's employés, had gone out to do some wood-cutting for his master; and was making his way home in his woollen coat and pyjamas, with "putties," or bandages, round his legs, a blanket over the little dirty skull-cap on his head, and his axe in his hand. As he passed a clump of long grass by the side of the track he was using, he heard something like a groan proceeding from it. Had it been dark

he would have promptly taken to his heels, but, as it was, he raised his axe to be ready for defence if necessary, and walked up to the spot from whence the sound had come. Here he found a man, a complete stranger but apparently a resident of the hills, lying on the ground and evidently very ill. He spoke to him, but the sufferer seemed unable to make any reply; his breathing was short and laboured, and he seemed indeed at the point of death. Chumpa was a kind-hearted man—Kilani was only about half a mile away—and, accustomed as all hill-men are to carrying heavy weights on their backs, he wrapped his blanket round the stranger and endeavoured to raise and carry him to the village. He managed to get him on to his shoulders and started off, but after proceeding a few hundred yards with his burden, he was seized with a suspicion that it was very limp and inert, and, putting it down, saw at once that the man was dead. Chumpa was not emotional—the night was now fast settling in—so taking off the blanket from the corpse, and lighting a sliver of pine-wood to serve as a torch for the double purpose of showing the track and keeping off evil spirits, he presently regained his home in safety. He mentioned the incident casually to a few of the residents; surmising that the man had fallen a victim

to that curse of India, malarial fever—to which all natives naturally attribute any death of which the cause is not perfectly clear. They did not trouble to take the corpse to the usual place down by the stream, but next morning burnt it where they had found it—the two rupees which was all they found on the body, being assigned to the cremators as their fee. No one knew anything about the stranger; no one noticed the swellings in the victim's groins and armpits; and, to save unnecessary inquiry and bother, the man was reported to the authorities as having been found dead.

Some days passed, when Chumpa one morning awoke with a racking headache and high fever—getting worse and worse during the day. Durga Dutt went over to see him, and found him very ill. He had some old packets of quinine which a "sahib" on a shooting trip had given him some time before, and which were stored away with parcels of seeds, cardamoms, salt, &c., in an old box, and he gave the invalid two or three of them. But they did not do him any good. Next day the invalid was weaker, and complaining of pains in his groins and armpits, gradually became delirious, and expired on the fourth day. His wife, who had been nursing him, was down with the same symptoms next

morning, and, after lingering for some four or five days, also succumbed. These were sad happenings—Chumpa and his spouse were much liked by all—but then, is not every man's fate written on his forehead in the sutures of the skull?

Perhaps these deaths would have excited more interest and discussion but for an incident which occurred two days later, and which almost completely obliterated the recollection of them. The headman worked in his fields and elsewhere like the rest of the villagers, and his wife assisted him in his labours. Quite good-caste women do this in the Himalayas; for opinion on the subject of the seclusion of women is far less exacting here than it is in the plains. The writer, indeed, has seen the women guiding the plough drawn by the little oxen which these people use. They are usually bright and cheerful, like most hill-folk, and are excellent helpmates to their husbands. Lallee, Durga Dutt's wife, was making her way back to the village in the afternoon after having been down the hillside to the spring for water, and, as it was late, was hurrying along as she clambered up the slope with her round iron pitcher (mud suitable for making earthenware utensils is scarce in the hills) poised on one hip —when she heard a rustling in the bushes to one side of the path. Darkness was setting in

rapidly (for there is no twilight in the east), and moreover several large trees overhung the spot where she stopped for a minute and listened. Suddenly a figure jumped out of the cover, and, standing in front of her, begged roughly for charity. A good deal of crime is indirectly caused in India by the foolish custom of the women of not only wearing their own jewellery on unsuitable occasions, but also of decorating their young children with it when playing about; and as, especially among the lower classes, investing or banking savings is seldom attempted but the money converted into trinkets, &c., such jewellery is often of considerable value. Lallee, not devoid of vanity, was wearing a very handsome gold nose-ring with a couple of pearls and a rough piece of turquoise attached to it, and this at once caught the eye of the stranger, who, rushing at her, despite her shrieks and struggles, tore off the ornament and bolted—just as Puttoo, a villager, attracted by her cries, appeared upon the scene armed with his woodman's axe. Her face was streaming with blood from the wound caused by the forcible tearing of the ring through the flesh of her nose, but she courageously shouted to her rescuer to follow and catch the thief—which Puttoo, after hastily ascertaining that her injuries were not serious, promptly turned to do.

The fugitive had got a good start down the hill, but the lusty young woodman dashed off in pursuit with his axe in his hand. It was now dark, but he quickly recognised by the noise made by the thief that he was no hill-man, and it was not difficult to follow him by the sounds. The chase was not a long one, for Puttoo, leaping like a goat from rock to rock while the other blundered about on the rough hillside, speedily overtook his quarry; and when the latter, brought to bay, raised the long bamboo club which he carried, to strike him, easily turned it aside with his weapon, brought the iron blade down on the man's head, and laid him prostrate at his feet.

In a few minutes he was joined by Durga Dutt and several of the villagers, called to the spot by Lallee's shrieks; and presently by two or three others bearing pieces of flaming pine-wood—by the light from which the robber was examined. The skull was crushed in like an eggshell. The headman, as a Brahman, would not touch the corpse, but he held a torch as two of the men turned it over to inspect it more closely. To everybody's horror it was discovered to be clothed in the saffron-coloured garments worn by some of the wandering ascetic classes known as "sunyasis," "sadhus," "faquirs," &c. Puttoo hesitatingly, but at Durga Dutt's command, opened the

victim's coat; but this only made matters worse, for, hanging over the left shoulder of the body was the "janeo," or sacred thread, of the "twice born." The man had probably thrown away his begging-bowl in his flight, but the stiffening hands still clutched the long iron pincers with a ring at the end, which these people usually carry. The body was thin and emaciated like that of a half-starved person. There was no money or anything else found upon him except a wooden rosary round his neck and Lallee's nose-ring thrust into his waist-cloth, and there was absolutely no clue as to his identity. A dead silence fell upon the group gathered round the corpse; with the straggling light from the torches falling on the gruesome remains, the dark foliage of the trees, and the faces of the frightened superstitious villagers. There was no doubt the man was a rogue — all knew that wandering mendicants of his class are often of disreputable character—but he certainly wore the thread, and was probably a Brahman. Indeed Puttoo's axe had not altogether obliterated the white lines of paint on his forehead which showed him to be a follower of the god Vishnu. It was a terrible matter, and at the back of every man's mind was a deep fear of the possible power for evil of the dead man's spirit. They talked

together quietly and earnestly for a short time. Evidently the first thing was to keep the affair secret, not only from the authorities, but also from their neighbours in the surrounding villages, who would be horrified at the occurrence. The headman himself went down to the stream, with one or two men to light the way, and returned with water which, taken from a source of Mother Gunga (the Ganges), had sacred properties; and upon this all the men swore to keep the secret inviolate. Then Puttoo and a caste fellow, by Durga Dutt's order, shudderingly raised the body, bore it to a dark deep ravine close by, and covered it with stones and earth. There was nothing more to be done, and, retracing their steps in silence to their homes, they related how the robber had unfortunately escaped, but that in his flight he had thrown away Lallee's ornament, which had been recovered. The report of the attempted robbery, in its expurgated form, was duly sent to the authorities—no action was deemed likely to be of any use, and the incident appeared to have closed.

It was not long after these events that, one evening, Puttoo mentioned to Nutthoo, another villager, that he had found two dead rats in his house—which happened to be next to that of the defunct Chumpa and his wife. The remark was not one

of striking interest, but then the subjects of discussion in Kilani were usually few. Nutthoo, removing his lips from the cone of green leaves containing tobacco and fastened with a thorn, which he was employing as a pipe, replied that he had seen Musammat Lallee sweep one out of her dwelling that very morning. This closed the trivial conversation—which, however, concerned very momentous happenings indeed. In the course of the next few days, quite a number of these rodents, and also a snake, were found lying about dead; and Puttoo was interested, and somewhat amused, to see a large specimen of the former run out of its hole in broad daylight, turn round, stagger, and fall lifeless. As hill-folk bury their grain in pits under their dwellings, there are always a good many rats and mice about a village, though they are not much seen; but now so many sick and dead ones were observed that the people began to wonder what the cause was. Unfortunately the warning which this mortality would have given to informed persons, was quite unrecognised by them. Presently Puttoo and his wife were both down with a disease of which the symptoms were precisely similar to those in the case of Chumpa. Both died, and then three other villagers fell sick—of whom two succumbed, and the third lingered on with abscesses in his armpits

and groins. The people were seriously alarmed, and it was generally felt that in some way the gods had been offended. This was very much the opinion of Durga Dutt and those who had been present at the "sadhu's" death. Puttoo, the principal offender, it is true was dead, but there was no telling where vengeance would stop. They kept their secret, but strenuously urged that propitiatory sacrifices should at once be offered—to which all agreed.

The "pujaree" who lived down the hill at the shrine, had very little to do with the villagers' affairs as a rule, being chiefly occupied in looking after the local god's comfort, and in performing ceremonial rites for any worshipper who might visit his temple. It is the "guru," or religious instructor, to whom Indians usually turn for advice in such difficulties—but there was not one in this small centre of population, and the "pujaree's" help was consequently solicited. That individual, who knew nothing about the "sadhu's" death, advised on general principles. He was inclined to think that something had offended Kali, Shiva's bloodthirsty consort — or perhaps it was only that she demanded more attention—but he recommended that two buffaloes should be sacrificed at once, and the blood sprinkled on the rough stone at the head of the

gorge behind the village, which local opinion regarded as her more particular abode and resort. At the same time he also made the valuable suggestion that Durga Dutt's quinine should be administered to patients and swallowed by them, wrapped in pieces of paper upon which incantations (which for a consideration he was prepared to write) were inscribed.

All these recommendations were adopted, and, moreover, fires were lighted about the place, and numerous offerings made at the shrine—but no good results followed. Durga Dutt sent off a trusted messenger to the authorities, describing the state of affairs and asking for assistance; but he knew no help could come for several days. Matters had become very serious indeed. Every morning brought its fresh and woeful tale of deaths and seizures—Lallee and two of her children had died—and cries of lamentation and sorrow came from half the houses in the village, as, one after another, the residents were struck down. Only those who have seen such an outbreak can form a conception of the rapidity and virulence with which it spreads.

Then the distracted people did what they ought to have done long before—determined to abandon the plague-stricken locality. Hill-folk are very skilful in making little leafy shelters, called

"chuppars," of interlaced boughs and dry grass—so much so that these are generally very fairly wind and rain proof. There were plenty of materials in the forests around, and in the course of the next few days the entire community was very fairly comfortably housed in the woods and jungles about a quarter of a mile away from the infected locality. The village was completely deserted—everything except a few garments and blankets being abandoned; and the dead bodies, which no one would touch, being even left unburied in the houses. It was some relief to the unhappy people to be doing something which promised some hope of improvement, and the grief and conscience-stricken headman rose manfully to the occasion. The inhabitants of the surrounding villages had broken off communication with the infected settlement, but he managed to make arrangements by which food, &c., were brought and left by them at selected spots—from whence the supplies were fetched and the purchase-money left in their place. He willingly supplied the animals for further sacrifices—made handsome donations to the shrine—and did all in his power to keep up the heart of his people. Some improvement followed the move into the jungles, but nevertheless cases continued, though in somewhat lesser numbers, to occur in the

"chuppars." Seventeen residents of Kilani were now dead, and victims were still demanded by the angry gods. All had wellnigh abandoned hope. The sight of the wild animals prowling round, and the vultures sailing over, the deserted village with its gruesome contents, added one more horror to the situation.

It was at this juncture that help came in the person of a "sahib" who had been warned of the trouble by the authorities. He had just been dealing with a similar outbreak some forty miles from Kilani, and it is probable that the unfortunate Chumpa's patient had been fleeing from this centre of infection when he had been found. The "sahib" had brought his small tent along with him, and also an Indian hospital assistant, drugs, disinfectants, &c.; and settled down under a grove of trees about half a mile from his new scene of work. Durga Dutt and he talked long and earnestly over the state of affairs, and soon a plan of campaign was agreed upon and commenced. The first thing to do was to separate the sick from the healthy, and to get the sufferers into a well-made waterproof "chuppar" which was to be used as a hospital. Then the people who had had cases of sickness among them, were isolated and encamped a short distance away from those who were presumably still uninfected. If

a case occurred among the former, the person attacked was carried to hospital and the remainder moved to a new "chuppar"—the old one being burnt down. As a matter of fact, this only happened in three instances, so that, after a week, what with plenty of fresh air, disinfection of clothing, medical treatment, &c., the outbreak seemed to have been got in hand. The people began to pluck up courage, and, urged on by the "sahib" and the headman, presently assisted in the necessary action for purifying the village. This was not a very difficult matter. The most troublesome and repulsive work was the lassoing of corpses through the doors and windows, and the dragging of them outside to a spot where the bodies could be cremated, or covered with earth and stones thrown on them from a short distance. Everything of small value was burnt; and the rest disinfected and spread out, exposed to the sun and wind, in the open. Then great bundles of straw, grass, and dry brushwood were pushed with poles into the houses, and the whole set alight. Lofty pillars of fire and smoke rose into the air, the flames roared through the site, and presently nothing was left of Kilani but blackened stone walls and charred timber.

A fortnight later, when no fresh attacks had occurred, the "sahib," leaving the hospital assist-

ant behind to look after the remaining sick, and to take any further action should it be necessary, left the spot. Fortunately the disease had not spread to the neighbouring villages, which remained healthy. He made arrangements for compensation to be paid by the authorities to the people for the destruction of their dwellings, and, before departing, instructed Durga Dutt and his friends that, after a month had elapsed without a fresh case, they could return to their homes and re-roof and repair them. But they never did return. Nothing would have induced the headman to do so; and more than one of the participants in the incidents connected with the holy man's death had seen his shade hovering at night over the burning village amidst the smoke! The place was obviously accursed. They waited in their temporary encampment until, in the spring, the keys were borne up to open the shrines among the Eternal Snows, and then the whole of the people tramped up to holy Kedarnath and Badrinath, and washed their sins away. On their return, Durga Dutt and his people settled on some land he owned a few miles away, and there presently another little centre of population with a new name, arose and flourished.

And this is how Kilani came to be blotted out of the map as a village, and its fire-scathed walls

left to serve to mark the spot where an epidemic of "mahamari," or hill-plague, had occurred. Happily such outbreaks are now rare; though rumour and tradition describe them as not so uncommon in past times. The writer heard the story of the fate of the ill-starred settlement from some communicative villagers (smoking some of his proffered cigarettes) while he was gazing, rather thoughtfully, at the desolate ruins. But as he happened to have been the "sahib" who had carried out the incendiary operations, the only part of the tale which was new to him was that relating to the death of the "sadhu." But this was just the sort of legendary addition which, in India, is sure to be woven into the history of such a calamity as it has been attempted to describe. It was doubtless poor Chumpa's humanity which had brought death and destruction upon Kilani and so many of its simple and little-considered inhabitants.

Scene in camp.

CONCLUSION.

In the foregoing chapters the author has endeavoured to depict something of the normal life and thought of the rural classes in India, and in this last one he has set down what he believes to be their sentiments regarding a few important matters which affect them very closely. It should be premised that, while he is inclined to think that very similar views are still held by a considerable proportion of the residents in towns and cities, it is the mental attitude of the silent millions in the villages which he is more particularly considering; for the members of this community constitute the great majority of the population of India — are the people who now like us best — and who will perhaps eventually determine whether we are to hold the country or not. They principally furnish, as has been said before, the recruits of the Indian army and police. They are at present politically inert, are intelligent in the pursuit of their special callings,

industrious, law-abiding, and obedient to authority. But they are deeply conservative in thought and feeling, ignorant, suspicious, and credulous. They are taught by their sacred books in which they believe, that it is no part of their duty or function to attempt to disturb the Government under which they may be placed, so long as it recognises its obligations; and, if protected in the possession of their religion, lives, and property, and not unduly harassed by vexatious enactments affecting their habits and customs (which, be it recognised, are inextricably mixed up with religious observances), will remain at least quiescent, and satisfied with our rule. They form perhaps the most unfavourable material in the world for the experiments of the well-intentioned but uninstructed reformer, or the kindly enthusiast honestly working for a principle under a misapprehension as to the facts.

It is essential, when dealing with the masses in India, to recognise that these do not represent a homogeneous people — far less a nation. It is just as grotesque indeed for the politician or agitator to pose as the exponent of the wants and ambitions of "India," as it would be for an Englishman to wax "patriotic" over the grievances of Europe. The population has ever consisted of a great collection of diverse peoples and

races holding different beliefs, employing different languages, and wedded to different thoughts, customs, and habits; the leaders of which in the past were almost always struggling for supremacy, and deluging the country with blood in the process. At least we have stopped this internecine strife, and, for the first time in history, all such peoples now live in fair amity together —safe in the possession of all they cherish most. We have taught them many forms of civilisation and comfort, have settled the land, arrested famine, brought medical aid to nearly all classes, reduced corruption, spread artificial irrigation, made railways and good roads, introduced the postal and telegraph systems, preserved the forests, assisted education, and almost raised the tone of the police out of the region of efficiency. So much at least we may claim to have accomplished. It is not a bad record, and for all these things the people are, as a body, grateful and appreciative.

But when we come to place to our credit, with what seems to us perfect justice, the granting of such gifts as those of higher education, sanitation, the ballot box, the protection of the money-lender, &c., we are met with an unexpected disappointment — for it is very doubtful indeed whether among the people at large the bestowal

of such blessings is generally accounted unto us for righteousness. As regards the first, it is not the intention of the writer to discuss the faulty character of our early efforts and the unwisdom of dissociating moral training from intellectual exercises, because these facts are now generally recognised, and efforts are being made in many directions to make Indian schools and colleges at least faint reflections of such institutions in the West. But so long as higher education, literary and professional, is (in the former country) of such a character that competitors feel that the chances of success in examinations are greatly improved by studying in Europe, there will be that rush of callow youths to Western centres of learning with their superior educational advantages, which the present writer holds to be so bad for both the students and the State. At first sight it would seem as if fuller contact with Occidental culture and institutions must be beneficial; but it should be remembered that these young men are little more than children as regards knowledge of the world, and that their upbringing and early environment have not been such as to adequately prepare them to receive with level-headedness, thoughts and ideas which Western boys have been almost always accustomed to hear discussed

by their elders since they could think and talk at all. Europe must be like a new world to these simple Indian lads, and the experience constitutes a real danger, mentally and morally. As a rule, they do not desire to leave their country; and their fathers, often small shopkeepers and the like, cannot usually really afford the expense. But a people accustomed to incurring extravagant expense where the marriage of a daughter is concerned, will cheerfully get into heavy debt to settle a son in life. We all know what too frequently happens to these unsophisticated youths while pursuing their studies in Europe; and the author has no great confidence in measures now being adopted for their protection in England. It is, however, on their return home, after a sojourn in a more or less democratic land where class distinctions are comparatively feeble, that the effects are most obvious and mischievous. Intoxicated with ideas he has imbibed there, the Indian student, on returning to a country where religion, caste, and custom are all opposed to their application, finds his position a distressing one. Every hour it will be borne in upon him that the consideration he received in the West, is denied him in his native land; and this, be it recognised, far less by the ruling race than by his own countrymen—though

he vents his spleen on the former. Little wonder that, even if he obtains his coveted post or distinction, he becomes soured and embittered, and, if he fails to secure success, goes over so readily to the opposition. Nearly every Indian youth returning home after his brief taste of equality in other climes, is a potential agitator and a possible disseminator of seditious doctrines among his untravelled companions. It certainly would appear that this steady source of recruitment for the ranks of the disaffected should as far as possible be discouraged—either by the provision of greater facilities for higher study in India (which would be extremely expensive and difficult, and involving the establishment of numerous costly libraries, museums, laboratories, &c.), or by a change of system of enlistment for the public services, and the introduction of less exacting tests of scholastic proficiency. Not that the standard of examinations is really high as Western notions go, but all things are relative, and it is high for the average mental calibre of the Indian student. Alienists might indeed suspect that not infrequently the struggle for success results in serious brain mischief, and the engendering of an unfortunately irritable mental attitude on the part of the hard-working, highly strung competitor for distinction.

As regards the first alternative—the provision of greater facilities for higher study in India—it would be as well if enthusiastic apostles of progress could realise how poor the Government of India really is, when the demands and requirements of a population of over 300 millions are considered. Taxation in England, originating with a majority of representatives of the people themselves, is viewed quite differently in a country where it is commonly regarded as the consequence of a mandate from an alien administration; and although an extension of the principle of elective institutions would appear to be likely to change or modify the attitude of the masses in this respect and to be consequently called for, it is to be feared that this result will not be attained until such time as the people come to repose the same confidence in their elected members of councils, &c., as the inhabitants of Western lands appear to usually bestow, with sometimes touching faith, upon their Parliamentary representatives. No one knows better than the Government of India what it is desirable to do, but no one knows perhaps quite so well how impossible it is to provide the necessary funds for the purpose with due regard to the requirements of the public safety, health, &c., without causing the

most serious discontent—if at all. The administration is often called upon to make bricks without straw. As Sir Henry Maine once said of those responsible for guiding the native races, they are "like men bound to make their watches keep time in two longitudes at once. . . . If they are too slow, there will be no improvement; if they are too fast, there will be no security." It is indeed in many cases far less a question of desirability or the reverse, than one of ways and means, which exercises the authorities. And probably never is the pressure of poverty more keenly felt than when projects for the more extensive education of the Indian people are under consideration.

As to how the masses regard higher education—nearly every one recognises its material advantage to the possessor; but they commonly hold that there is a spiritual side to the matter which has not received sufficient attention. "Gurus," or religious teachers, and such Brahmans as are still exercising Levitical functions, are at heart opposed to it almost to a man; while most women (whose influence is far greater than is generally supposed) view it with suspicion and disapproval as calculated to subvert religion and destroy respect for parents. And, although it seems a hard thing to say, the

Indian lad, as matters stand, is far more likely to learn morality, discipline, and respect for authority from such sources, than he is from attending a high school — and universities are little more than examination boards. Then the more virile, but far less lettered, races to the north, resent the importance attached to scholastic ability in the selection for Government posts; regarding this as seriously handicapping them in the race for power, wealth, and distinction. It is a difficult question. No one is so foolish as not to recognise the advantage of literary knowledge and the necessity of encouraging its extension; but there are many who fear that in making it so much the touchstone of merit, we may neglect the claims of men with other and perhaps more valuable qualifications for the task of assisting us in governing the country. If ever there was a land where character, courage, tact and resourcefulness (totally untested by these examinations) are essential in an administrator, that land is India.

Really scholarly men, as we understand the term—that is, men who pursue learning for itself — usually prefer in that country to study their own venerable Sanskrit epics and other religious and philosophical works, and comparatively seldom present themselves at the gates of

the temples of European wisdom. But here young India gathers in ever increasing numbers. Examinations are consecrated by the State as the avenues to the much-coveted Government appointments, and securing success in passing these, therefore, is the principal object of most of the students. It is doubtful whether such lads, indeed, care much as to what they are examined in; and were the authorities in an absent moment to prescribe an acquaintance with the legend of the Great Panjandrum as the criterion of knowledge, the candidates would probably just as cheerfully attack this as any other more orthodox form of literature.

The fact seems to be that, as regards education, our policy has been too ambitious for the means at our disposal—that we have indeed, to use a transatlantic expression, "bitten off more than we can chew." Both money and control are inadequate. There are, of course, well-conducted universities and scholastic institutions more or less under the direction of officers of the Educational Department, Missions, &c.; but cheap and nasty educational mills, staffed by ill-paid, incompetent, and very imperfectly supervised, men, exist all over the country; and since such so-called schools and colleges, although assisted by grants-in-aid, depend largely for support

upon students' fees, every one is welcome who can provide them. A study of the results of examinations for university degrees suggests what the raw material is like which annually presents itself for slaughter. Something like 24,000 students, it would seem, appear at the matriculation, or school final, examination, but the casualties and missing reduce the force so much along the route that eventually only some 2000 lads reach the safe haven of a degree. And what of all the "fails"?—who are most of them of small means, and have abandoned the occupations of their fathers. Some get private clerkships and similar posts, (for a knowledge of English always has a certain value), but the majority are thrown on the world as disappointed men, and too often readily join that movement which is so delightfully described by its followers as "negation of co-operation with the Government."

Primary education, however, stands in the minds of the people upon a different footing to that of higher education. It has an obvious practical use in the affairs of nearly every one, however modest his aspirations. It debars children, it is true, very much from working in early life and thereby adding to the family stocking, and so is by no means popular with the working classes; but, nevertheless, all sensible people

among them recognise the desirability of possessing such knowledge as will enable the owner to defeat the machinations of the village shopkeeper and money-lender, and they are consequently usually ready to make some sacrifices in order to obtain it. Almost all Anglo-Indians, and the great majority of the upper and middle classes of Indians, are in favour of extending primary education among the masses as far as possible—it is as regards the advantages of the indiscriminate diffusion of higher education that opinions so widely differ.

Technical education is at present looked upon with coldness by the higher castes, and the members of the middle class, who constitute the majority of the students, have, as said before, commonly one goal before them—the safe, fairly dignified, and comfortable seclusion of an office chair—preferably in a Government bureau. But, as the authorities well recognise, from the encouragement of this form of education much may be hoped in time. Caste, of course, is at present the great difficulty, but in the opinion of a good many Indian gentlemen with whom the author has discussed the subject, this will probably be sufficiently relaxed by degrees to admit of the adoption of many occupations by persons who now reject them. Brahmans, for instance, are

seen to-day engaged in all sorts of respectable employments, with very little apparent loss of prestige; and as for the more socially degraded, but still intelligent, castes, it will be a serious problem presently as to how to get the work carried out which they will have abandoned for more lucrative and pleasanter forms of labour. But, nevertheless, technical education should be undoubtedly encouraged, and the outlook in this direction is promising.

Female education in India, however, is in a parlous condition. Only something like four per cent of girls of school-going age are at school, and many of them are in the infant stage. Only one per cent of women can read and write, and very few, comparatively, have any knowledge of English. This is a grievous state of affairs, and efforts are being made to improve matters. But you may take a horse to the water without being able to make him drink. There is little or no real desire among Indians, as a rule, to have their wives and daughters taught. The crux of the matter lies in the fact that a girl among the more respectable classes must not leave her house when she arrives at a marriageable age; and this means that she must abandon her studies about the age of twelve, unless she can pursue them in her home—an arrangement for which, apart

from those offered by zenana missions, there are at present few facilities. In some parts of the country there is a tendency to raise the marriageable age, but the interference of the State in this question, though morally right, is, from a political point of view, not without danger. It touches a very tender spot in the domestic life of a people.

The question of female education is a difficult and thorny one. There are signs of a change of thought in this respect in some directions, but no substantial increase in the number of educated women in India is likely to take place until this change becomes more general and pronounced. The working classes go about pretty much as they like, but the seclusion of their females, and a more rigid adherence to old thoughts and customs on such subjects, are usually two of the earliest and most marked consequences of a family becoming prosperous and rising in the social scale—and apparently it is the women themselves who are most insistent on the propriety of adopting such procedure!

All this sounds discouraging, but it is as well to face facts. It can hardly be said that up to the present time the results of our efforts to extend literary knowledge can be viewed with satisfaction, or, indeed, even with equanimity.

The writer does not wish to be misunderstood. Higher education and a knowledge of English are very valuable things, and should be reasonably encouraged; and it is probably true that they have raised the tone of probity and morality in their possessors. But while the standard of such exotic knowledge is so much lower among the more virile and masterful races than among those whom they look down upon and despise, there is a political danger, when selecting Indians for Government employment, in attaching so much importance to purely intellectual attainments to the virtual exclusion of claims based upon more robust, and certainly equally valuable, characteristics. Moreover, too much is expected from higher education. To some people it seems to be a kind of fetich—a sort of talisman by which Oriental thought is suddenly to be transmuted into Occidental and up-to-date convictions. As a matter of fact, it is at present rather a destructive, than a constructive, force. It destroys the student's old thoughts and beliefs, but only very partially substitutes anything really definite for them. Apart from theological considerations, the true missionary of progress and enlightenment in India is the engineer. All the schools and colleges in the country do not open up the minds of the people, and lead them to a recog-

nition of the advantages of Western ideas and knowledge, like a railway or tram line, electric lighting, or other prosaic inventions, the utility and comfort of which all can see and appreciate. Such things appeal to the practical side of the Indian nature (not much developed), instead of to the metaphysical, and to some extent morbid, element which predominates in his mental constitution. The mind of the young Indian of any ability is already seething with all sorts of crude speculations and half-digested ideas when he comes to his studies, and it is to be feared that the curriculum of the average European educational centre often only makes confusion worse confounded in this respect.

Sanitation, the author regrets to have to say, is usually regarded as a most troublesome fad of the administration—bringing much worry and annoyance on the people in the ridiculous attempt to thwart the will of the Great Gods. While we must of course persist in our efforts, it is necessary therefore to proceed with some caution and tact if we desire to make any real and permanent progress in the enterprise. So far as the experience of the writer goes, the conditions most dangerous to health are more prominent in the towns than in the villages — and the amount of genuine enthusiasm manifested in hygienic matters about

equal in both localities. If we could exclude that curse of the country, malaria, India would not be such a particularly unhealthy place—and were not so many children hurried into existence without adequate means for their support, the death-rate would rapidly fall. The people are cleanly in their habits, and the interior of a dwelling, especially in the rural areas, is as a rule very fairly satisfactory. The surroundings of a village or small centre of population, it is true, leave a good deal to be desired on account of the primitive habits of the people, but the disinfecting power of an Eastern sun and the action of a hot desiccating breeze, are factors of considerable importance in destroying pathogenic and dangerous germs. The common people may be said to live almost entirely in the open air except during the cold nights in winter. The olfactory organs of Europeans are often outraged in Eastern bazaars by a number of odours such as those of boiling "ghi," or clarified butter, burning cow-dung, &c., but these, although unpleasant, are not necessarily more obnoxious than the effluvia from a factory, or the emanations from a farmyard, in England. It is the water supply which is the great source of disease in India. We have dealt largely with the requirement of pure filtered water supplies in the large cities, and if we could only maintain the purity of

the contents of the village well, a very great improvement in the public health would immediately result — especially as regards epidemic disease. Steps in this direction have been taken, and may be profitably extended, but there is the omnipresent difficulty that nearly every one draws his, or her, own supply by means of a vessel let down by a cord into the well—so that contamination in this way is the simplest thing in the world. It might seem easy to do away with such proceedings; but here, as in a thousand other matters, the reformer finds himself almost directly "up against" caste and time-honoured custom.

In fact, beyond the removal of very glaring and obvious defects, very little can be profitably attempted at the present time as regards altering the sanitary condition of villages; and even in towns and cities it is very much a question of cleansing the outside of the platter. The sanctity of the "zenana" must be respected, and consequently in the matter of domestic sanitation we are practically helpless, and can only look for substantial and permanent improvement to a change of thought on such matters on the part of the people themselves—of which fortunately there are indications in some directions. In large centres of population, the suspicion of sanitary measures has largely died down; though an appreciation of

them has only recently commenced. When filtered water supplies, for instance, were first introduced, it was very difficult in some localities to get the people to use them; but now this is no longer the case. Public opinion on the subject is certainly improving, and the author claims that the sanitary procedure carried out at religious fairs and other large gatherings, has resulted in late years in such a reduction of sickness and mortality at them, as to serve as valuable object-lessons to the people regarding the advantages of cleanliness and hygienic measures. Such lessons will probably bear fruit in time. The attitude of the people towards sanitation, as in the case of so many other innovations, has three stages—at first one of actual hostility, then one of indifference, and finally, one of appreciation. In towns and cities the people are hovering between the second and third stages; but in the villages it would be incorrect to say that they had got even so far.

As regards our administration of the law in India, the ordinary native of the country recognises the advantage of knowing what it is safe or unsafe to do, but regrets that the codes make no distinction of classes, and that litigation is so much slower and more expensive than the proceedings of the old village "panchayets," or local tribunals, which formerly cheaply and quickly

settled many caste and other troubles, but are now unfortunately losing their weight and importance in many parts of the country. And it is undoubtedly true that there are thousands of cases every year (often involving thefts of a few pence) which could be far better settled in the village than in the law courts. Indians hold, too, that the present system is less deterrent to the criminal than that existing in former times—though when one recognises what that system was, its disappearance seems hardly a matter of regret. The writer well remembers, when he first went to India, seeing in the Lucknow jail the prisoners with hands cut off or noses slit, who, punished before our annexation of Oudh, had drifted back into custody—probably mostly from inability to earn a living. Perjury, the average litigant considers, (possibly correctly), is as common as ever, and nowadays you have to not only buy your witnesses, but pay a lawyer as well—for the idea is certainly widely prevalent that no ruling is likely to be obtained in the courts without some legal agency. But despite these defects and drawbacks in our legal system, the unhappy taste for litigation seems to be steadily increasing—fostered no doubt by a class of men whom we cannot be charged with actually creating, but who certainly multiply and wax exceedingly fat and stiff-necked under our rule.

The legal profession in India contains many honourable and able Indian gentlemen, but the clever, voluble, unscrupulous, and often seditious, lawyer, is far too much to the fore; and, moreover, monopolises an altogether undue proportion of seats on councils, boards, &c., where his influence is not invariably for good. A legal career is a lucrative one, and unfortunately seems to possess a special attraction for the modern Indian student. This is not surprising, for, apart from its emoluments, it gives under our rule an amount of power to its followers far beyond that which any other profession bestows. The taste for litigation is a besetting sin of the Oriental, and it is extraordinary how a horde of lawyers will suck a comfortable subsistence out of quite a small and impoverished population with its curious proclivity to a legal gamble. The modern low-class lawyer is an increasing nuisance to both the citizen and the State. It is not the province of the writer to suggest remedies for the present state of affairs, but could some method be adopted for settling minor cases by village tribunals, and for making legal procedure in the courts simpler and cheaper, it would undoubtedly be a great and welcome boon to the masses.

Different opinions will be held as to the expediency or otherwise of granting recent conces-

sions regarding more extended representation of the people—but it is difficult to see how such concessions could have been logically withheld. No experienced official would expect them to satisfy the extremists, for probably nothing would do so; but doubtless they have been welcomed by the more moderate sections among both educated and uneducated people. The success or failure of the scheme depends upon the character of the men who secure election, and whether they be the trusted representatives of the people, or merely pushing nobodies with glib tongues and a smattering of Western knowledge. Some patience will be required in the matter—the men we really want will probably not be the first to present themselves for such positions, or most ready to appeal to the suffrages of the proletariat—but there is a very fair hope that, as time goes on, the more trustworthy and influential people will come forward. It would certainly be an enormous gain, and satisfy a crying want, if we could secure a body of loyal and intelligent Indians who could explain the desires and motives of Government when it introduces any measure, honestly to the masses, and (most important addition) with the weight of a reputation for integrity and practical common-sense behind them.

Indians of all classes more or less dislike the

Police, and charges of oppression, bribery, &c., are constantly being brought against the force. Confessions made on the spot, are frequently retracted before a magistrate on the ground that they had been extorted by undue pressure. It is the favourite suggestion of the low-class lawyer in desperate cases. But although some of these accusations are undoubtedly true, the position of the guardians of the peace in India is extraordinarily difficult. What Western people can hardly be expected to understand is the almost complete absence in the country of what we call public spirit. If a crime is committed, although quite a number of people (who would never commit it themselves and indeed strongly reprobate it) know every detail of the occurrence and even the actual name of the perpetrator of the deed, still, in all probability, not one will come forward to give any information or assistance unless they themselves are the actual sufferers—partly from fear of incurring the enmity of the culprit's friends, but more particularly because they do not consider it to be any business of theirs, and are not prepared to put themselves to any inconvenience or annoyance for such an abstract consideration as the public good. Knowing his own people (and their customs under similar difficulties), the Indian police official believes that the only way to get any

information out of such persons is to frighten them by a bullying and truculent demeanour, and, it may be sometimes, actual violence—though this last is too dangerous to be often attempted. It would be idle to pretend that the police force is immaculate—it is not; but it has to deal with conditions and a state of public feeling quite unknown in Europe, and the system of detection of crime in India therefore cannot, with any hope of efficiency, be modelled upon one suitable to a community where the great majority of its members are on the side of law and order, and ready to come fearlessly forward to assist the authorities in maintaining the same. The writer holds no brief for the Police Department, but, at the risk of being misunderstood, must confess to a fear that if the so-called reform of the force be pushed too far, the only result will be to emasculate it. There are some who think that indications of the approach of this undesirable consummation are even now not wanting.

Finally, there are the agrarian questions, and the probable effect of recent changes on the dumb millions on the countryside, to be considered. The professional and trading classes, who should of all others be grateful to us but who are by no means invariably so, are amassing wealth and adding field to field, to the dissatisfaction of people at

both ends of the social scale. Both rajah and ryot watch their increasing power and opulence with annoyance, and view with considerable alarm the destruction of ancestral holdings and the encroachments of the new men. The small landowners, the headmen of the villages, and the peasantry, are the backbone of the State. They were never a match for the trading classes in chicane, and nowadays when so many of the latter are educated, their position is worse than ever. The Government is fully alive to the danger, and some of the best legislation in recent years has been designed for the protection of the small landowner and his tenantry, and for the provision of facilities for obtaining loans without resorting to the avaricious usurer. In a country where meteorological conditions, especially the rainfall, are so uncertain, the tiller of the soil is always particularly exposed to the risk of almost total failure of his crops, and to the necessity of obtaining temporary accommodation to carry him over a bad year. Usury, of course, is no new thing in India, but in old times was held in check by proceedings which we could not respectably countenance; but still, having made such checks impossible, a moral obligation rests upon us to, in some effective manner, stand as far as possible between the money-lender and his prey. The

writer advances the opinion with some diffidence, but he holds the view that if in the future any widespread and dangerous disaffection occurs among the rural population, it will be because this duty has not been sufficiently recognised, or has not been adequately discharged. In this connection the encouragement and support of primary education should be useful in enabling the peasantry to better hold their own, but the matter is too important to make it possible to wait for the influence of this very partial remedy to operate. An impression, erroneous though it be, certainly exists in India at the present time that the tendency of the modern system of administration is to favour the educated professional and commercial classes at the expense of the rest of the people. A belief of this kind, if it became at all widespread and based upon any real foundation, would be calculated to put a considerable strain upon the loyalty and attachment of what are by far the most powerful and numerous sections of the community.

India still is, and will be for many a long day yet, an almost purely agricultural country—with a population deeply conservative both by instinct and tradition, and, as a body, quite incredulous regarding the advantages of "pushfulness" and the acquisition of great wealth. Commercialism

among Hindus is confined to certain castes, and the Koran forbids Muhammadans to exact interest for money lent—a prohibition respect for which must constitute a serious drawback in successful financial and trading enterprise; even allowing for some latitude when dealing with an infidel! It is of course difficult for a more or less democratic and eminently practical race like our own, to grasp the fact that its ideals are not those of the Oriental —yet these last demand consideration, and are not indeed altogether to be scorned. By a population in which the caste system is still so strong, such things as prestige and self-respect are very warmly cherished—in a country where at least two-thirds of the population are peasants (and, be it noted, largely farm their own land), the parting with an ancestral holding, however tiny, tears at the heart-strings of the dispossessed. Land in India is still held to be the most desirable commodity to own—its value is rising—and no more convincing proof of the falsity of the allegations of the agitator regarding the oppressiveness of government assessments can be adduced, than the fact that it is in land that the middle classes mostly rush to invest their spoils. These conditions are fortunately nowadays far more appreciated and recognised in England than they were twenty or thirty years ago. Wider knowledge of our great dependency,

justice and expediency, all bid us maintain the traditional social distinction of the natural leaders of the people, the nobility and great land-owning classes; and call upon us to protect the simple yeoman of the country, not only against those who seek to deprive him of his property, but also to some extent against himself. Such statements probably sound ridiculous to Western ears, but then (as has been frequently remarked) the West is not the East.

As said before, at present the people who like us best are the rural classes—mostly because they were the greatest sufferers in the old, but still discussed, times of warfare and oppression, and are consequently most appreciative of the Pax Britannica which has now existed for so many years—and also perhaps to some extent because strange and inexplicable enactments do not very much touch them in the seclusion of their rustic homes. They would prefer things a little different, of course—a less cast-iron and sombre form of government, and more of the "panem et circenses" and the display of pomp and splendour. What appeals to them is a "durbar," or some other great exhibition of magnificence—a solid meal and lots of fireworks. A munificent grant by Government for higher education or some benevolent purpose, leaves them comparatively cold, but they dearly

love to watch the Indian potentate with his gaily attired attendants as he scatters coins to the crowd from the top of his elephant when he comes among his people! They are interested, too, in the march of a field-force through the country, or in watching military manœuvres—and such operations have a good deal more than a merely spectacular effect. It does no harm to show the steel under the glove by such demonstrations; and supplies, &c., are generally so well arranged for that no hardship results to the villagers from such proceedings. It is very seldom that any friction occurs between the troops and the peasantry—the marches are good for the health and training of the men—and the occasional roar of a cannon on the quiet countryside is a useful counterblast to the noisy declamations of the itinerant sedition-monger. Kipling, if the writer's memory serves, has an illuminating passage in a letter from a border chieftain who, writing from Calcutta to his home in the rugged north, instructs his correspondent (who probably acted on the order) to "take it out of" an agitator who had misrepresented the real strength of the "Sirkar" to them, and so got them into trouble!

It is not an easy thing to define the real attitude of the rural classes towards British rule. If the term loyal be used in the same sense as it is in

Europe, it is not an appropriate one to apply. One can hardly be loyal to what is not understood, and the "sahib," with all his strange thoughts, customs, habits, religion, &c., is a mystery to the average peasant. He comes from a land the peasant has never seen; he belongs to a race the doings of which, out of India, the ryot rarely hears; and what the average agriculturist can understand of European administrative procedure he is not particularly enamoured with. The strangers take no part in his domestic life, nor he in theirs. Still he does not resent all this—indeed he prefers that this gulf should be fixed. He does not seek to cross it himself, and he wishes to goodness the "sahibs" would take the same view and leave him alone! He likes them on the whole, however, and is usually loyal in the full sense to those with whom he is brought into close contact; as all those who have worked with him in either peace or war will be the first to acknowledge.

The tendency is to attribute this detached attitude to ignorance and indifference; and indeed the average villager can assume a demeanour of bovine stupidity when it suits his purpose, which easily explains this impression being so general among casual observers. Ignorant in the usual sense of course he is, but in his special calling

he displays much intelligence and system; and although he is distrustful of inventions, and too poor to make experiments, he will very soon employ a useful implement if he can afford to purchase it, and act upon a suggestion he perceives to be sound. He has been well trained in ritual and the religion of his forefathers; he hears his ancient literature read out to him; and he knows wild nature like a book.

Indifferent he certainly is not—resigned perhaps is the better word. Allah has predestinated all things, and the sacred books of the Hindu relate how every man's fate is inscribed on his forehead by the finger of Brahma himself. His "guru" will have taught him that only great provocation justifies him in resisting those who have been set in authority over him—he belongs as a rule to labouring castes—and absolute obedience to parents has been instilled into his mind from his earliest childhood. All this tends to engender a philosophic attitude of contented acquiescence in existing conditions—and this seems to be the one taken up by the rural classes at the present time. It is of course incompatible with the consequences of the spread of higher education, and when this last comes to extensively permeate the masses, no one can foresee what will be the results.

It must not be concluded from all that has been stated, that the writer takes a pessimistic view of the future of India, or holds the opinion that its rulers have lost touch with the feelings of the people. The men on the spot are fully aware of where sources of friction and misunderstanding between the races exist, and are constantly striving to remove them. Probably most of the sensible people in our great dependency recognise the benefits of our rule; though possibly some of them are not averse to seeing how far the authorities can be squeezed in the matter of concessions, so long as they themselves are not asked to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. They have no wish, however, to entirely subvert existing arrangements. They know that the fall of the British "raj" (dominance) would be the signal for the land to be once more deluged in blood, and for it to fall under the thraldom of some other and perhaps less just and sympathetic race or power than our own. History and tradition tell them what invading strangers are likely to do for them; and the middle classes know very well what would be the probabilities of the trader retaining his wealth, or the parvenu landowner returning alive after visiting his newly-acquired property, were we to quit the country. We have no right to expect ardent loyalty from the people of India—a Muhammadan

would rather be ruled by a Muhammadan—a Sikh by a Sikh—a Hindu by a Hindu—and so on; but they know that such things cannot be except through much tribulation and sorrow—if at all. And at least the "sahib," if eccentric, is honest and tries to do right—he is strong and resourceful and supplies the leadership so useful in emergencies—and is, moreover, unencumbered with all the trammels of relationship, caste, &c., which so often hamper the course of justice among themselves. He is usually wise and impartial, and commonly accessible, courteous and sympathetic. In nine cases out of ten, if an Indian is aggrieved or feels himself injured, he will put it down, not to the injustice of the "sahib," but to the villainy of some personal enemy who has gained his ear.

So the average man accepts the rule of the "Sirkar" as the only possible arrangement by which the forces of contending factions can be overawed, and peace and security preserved in the land. He regrets that the excitable and strenuous character of his rulers so often makes them a nuisance, but he has got more or less used to them. Perhaps when we consider the immense gulf still fixed between the thoughts of the Oriental and ourselves, this contented acquiescence in existing conditions is about as much as we can

reasonably expect. It is as well to abandon all visions of a universally contented India—*quot homines tot sententiæ*—there are many schools and factions; some appreciative of the administration, and some not. This is, of course, the case in all countries, but what complicates the question in the present instance is the existence of such an enormous proportion of uninformed, ignorant, and credulous men, who are so readily exploited by the agitator for his own purposes. The task of those set in authority bristles with difficulties; not reduced as a rule by extra-official interference. When we remember the complex character of the population, it is easy to see how seldom any inclusive enactment, no matter how sound in principle, can be, in practice, applicable to all sections of the community; and hence the virtue of what is known as permissive legislation, whereby the application of Acts can be extended or reduced (both as regards areas and persons) in the discretion of Local Legislative Councils. Were we to let things slide, which is unthinkable, we should get on easily enough, but, having put our hands to the plough, we must, even at some cost of popularity, refuse to look back, and must persist in the course we have adopted. Still we might hasten more slowly. The trouble is that in India we can never be quite sure as to how the slightest

innovation will be viewed and received. When the rat was proved to be the principal means by which the dreaded plague was propagated and measures were consequently introduced for its destruction, how many people foresaw that the procedure would be unpopular because a deity used this rodent as a conveyance when bringing good luck into the house? Somewhat similar and unexpected difficulties are always confronting the administrator in India; and if a false step be taken, it is not easy to retrieve it without loss of dignity and prestige. In the East, such an action is nearly always ascribed to timidity, and there is no more dangerous policy than to retreat from a position which has been once definitely taken up. Warren Hastings, one of the wisest men who ever came to the country, wrote, "In no part of the world is the principle of supporting a rising interest and of depressing a falling one, more prevalent than in India." We rule very largely by prestige. The clerk will take lower pay for the increased dignity of working for the Government; the soldier is proud of lending his sword to the Great King; and the same feeling of attachment to the Throne, and pride in being connected, however humbly, with the great "Sirkar," runs through all services and departments. Government service is, of course, a good thing from a

pecuniary point of view, but, apart from this, it raises a man's self-respect and his position in the eyes of his neighbours, to be associated with the unquestionably most powerful and greatest nation in the East. Pride in birth and position and the maintenance of dignity, indeed, are very leading characteristics of almost all classes in India. Very often the most minute differences between castes and sub-castes connote various grades of social status which are very jealously respected and observed. Every man, except in the very lowest stations, religiously preserves his "izzat" (honour or self-respect), and courtesy, among all classes but the most degraded, is the rule. All forms of badinage or flippancy are regarded as rank vulgarity. The dignified politeness of even a small landowner to a visitor or a guest, is admirable; and among the higher classes this is observed to an extent which seems to us almost absurd. But as all good officers know (and act upon the knowledge), it is the "hall mark" of the gentleman—the "pucka sahib"—and no administrator or official can be really popular who neglects it. The distinguished English statesman who said that discourtesy in India amounted almost to a crime, never spoke a truer word in his life.

With these few observations the present volume

must conclude. It makes no pretensions to profundity or literary merit, but is merely a modest attempt to show the masses of India as they really are—in the hope that it may to some extent help to correct a balance which is possibly in need of adjustment, and assist people in England to visualise Indian affairs in true perspective. The opinions set forth have been arrived at as the result of thirty years' service in India, mostly spent among that vast patient population on the countryside which constitutes at least two-thirds of all the inhabitants of the land—a population at present almost negligible politically, but which will one day come into its own. Its real voice is seldom heard, for too often those who claim to speak for it, not only have their own axes to grind, but are moreover quite out of sympathy with the wishes and desires of the classes whom they pretend to represent. Such wishes and desires are simple enough, but we shall only learn and know them by keeping touch with the masses through the medium of the district officers and their loyal Indian friends. They are (assuming that we propose to retain India) worth considering and respecting, both from motives of kindly justice and political expediency. For, to repeat once more, their possessors—the dumb millions in the villages, the bone and sinew of the country and

the principal source of our recruits for the loyal Indian Army and Police—are the people who most like and trust us, and who will really count should clouds ever gather on the Eastern horizon.

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